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The Study Bible

Edited By

JOHN T. STIRLING



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THE STUDY BIBLE

Editor: JOHN STIRLING

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

*A Little Library
of Exposition*

with

New Studies

by

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

and

JAMES MOFFATT, D.D., D.LITT.

GARDEN CITY

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THE STUDY BIBLE—THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
—o—
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TO THE READER OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

That this Epistle holds a revelation as important to us as it was to the Romans, no one will deny ; but to feel its force as its first readers felt it, the argument of the Apostle must be translated into modern terms. It is not sufficient simply to translate the words into modern English. We must get behind the writer's words to his thoughts, and behind his thoughts to the facts which he challenged, and, if possible, discover if these facts, or anything corresponding to them, exist in the world to-day. Have we in our midst the evils and errors which the Apostle attacks in this letter? It is necessary, of course, first to understand clearly what St. Paul's message was to the Romans. That is attempted here. But perhaps, as the student reads, it will appear to him that the twentieth century also has many people who look upon their birth and their education, as the Jew did upon his ancestry and book-code ; and that there are still those who believe that the only things worth striving after are material prosperity, sensuous pleasure, and natural virtue. As he reads he may feel that the mystery and miracle of Christian Faith are still but faintly apprehended.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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An Appreciation

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

BY

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

THE
FIRST
STUDY

The Bishop of Winchester is
the Right Rev. F. T. Woods,
D.D. His writings include:
*Interpreters of God, The Great
Fellowship, Great Tasks and
Great Inspirations, The Prayer
Book Revised.*

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

BY THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

SOME years ago the late Professor Lecky published a book entitled *The Map of Life*. That title might well serve for the famous letter with which we are now concerned. I read it, and I ask those who hold this book in their hands to read it, as if it was a newly discovered document, and I proceed to ask what it has to tell me of life, of God, of conduct, of the hereafter. I note in passing the remarkable fact that ■ document written nineteen centuries ago by one who in the cultured society of that day was regarded as ■ religious fanatic, and whose influence (in their judgment) was negligible, should now be universally acclaimed as a treatise of the first importance, not merely by students of history, but by those multitudes in every land who find in Christ's way of life the answer to their questionings and the ground of their hopes.



The letter seems to have been dictated ¹ in ■ house at Corinth, in which St. Paul was ■ guest—one of the salutations at the close of the letter is from “Gaius my host” ²—and conveyed by ■ woman, Phœbe,³ described ■ a deaconess, and evidently ■ lady of some consequence, to the Church at Rome. That fact alone indicates the ease and safety of travel in the Empire of that time. The Church of Rome was a mixed community of Jewish settlers in the metropolis and of others, some of whom were Romans, some Greeks and Orientals, drawn for the most part from that strange

¹ xvi. 22.

■ xvi. 23.

■ xvi. 1, 2.

crowd from every region of the Mediterranean basin and beyond it, who were continually drifting to the imperial city. Some of these Jews, Christian and non-Christian, were persons of importance, but the majority, to judge from the satirists of the time, were beggars and vendors of small wares, pedlars of the pavement who sought to attract the attention of more wealthy patrons.¹ The Apostle is obviously thinking of both sections of this community, Jews and Gentiles, as he speaks his mind in the letter, though now one and now the other is uppermost in his thought.

It is scarcely possible for us to conceive the Roman world at the first impact of the Gospel, a world of which this letter is a contemporary document. It was a magnificent age; politically and imperially the only age which will bear comparison with these latter days of the British Commonwealth. It was an age of splendid art—men like Horace and Virgil were among its poets. Its architecture was illustrated by splendid buildings, some of which, like the Arch of Titus, are still standing. Socially it was decadent—a superstructure of luxury on a foundation of slavery. As for its morals, we can only say that other available evidence bears out the awful indictment with which the letter opens.² Yet it possessed a glamour which in some measure fascinated even St. Paul himself. He was intensely proud of his Roman citizenship, and his superb idea of a Catholic Community of Christ—His Body—emancipated from all narrowness, drawn from every nation and stretching through all the centuries, owed some of its inspiration at least to the world-embracing empire in which he lived. Its core and centre was in the City of the Seven Hills, but by its

¹ Sanday and Headlam: *Romans*, p. xxiv.

² I. 18-32.

political organisation it handled countries in the north-west like Britain, lands across the Mediterranean like North Africa, provinces in the east like Asia Minor, and territories in the west like Spain. It was, humanly speaking, owing to this Roman citizen more than to anyone else that Christianity was so quickly emancipated from its Jewish cradle and was launched on its course ■ ■ world-religion. He was indeed a religious genius of the first order. But it was not so much his ideals, great as they were, that captured and riveted his hearers. It was his personality. He was, it is safe to say, on any calculation, one of the six supreme personalities of history. Almost contemptible in physical form, he was—if we may trust the traditional portrait—a man of striking appearance, with large head and massive forehead, long and aquiline nose, with keen dark eyes which gleamed from beneath bushy eyebrows; of stooping gait, but possessed of an energy which could be irresistible in its impact, whether in tempestuous speech or in swift action. Moreover, he was ■ man of intense emotion, capable of giving and inspiring boundless affection. Though he excited implacable hatred in his opponents, he was followed about by companions, mainly young men, any one of whom would gladly have laid down his life for the master whom he loved.

Such, in briefest outline, was the world in which our document first saw the light, and such was the man from whom it came. From any intelligent point of view such a document would be interesting, but to those who believe that its writer was a divinely inspired interpreter of the religion which is destined to capture the world; that it contains truths which time cannot alter, and which are daily confirmed in Christian experience,—to such this document is supremely

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precious, and to its understanding they must needs give themselves with all the care, knowledge, and obedience which they can bring to the task.



Its theme is not directly stated, but the letter might well be entitled "Life according to God's plan, and how to live it." If the letter has a key-word, that word is Righteousness. God's righteousness, demonstrated in face of man's sin and man's need. Man's righteousness, made possible through the love of God. Both lines of thought and fact converge in Jesus Christ. In Him the demonstration of God's righteousness was made. In Him man's righteousness is at once displayed and achieved. St. Paul, that is, attempts an answer to the question put to himself sooner or later by every thoughtful man with a conscience, What is the highest moral ideal, and how can I attain it? The moral ideal to which the Apostle, in common with every Jew, had been brought up was summed up in that key-word to which reference has already been made: Righteousness. With us perhaps the more natural word would be Character, meaning the highest achievement of goodness and usefulness which is possible for man. The statement of that standard in the Old Testament has never been surpassed: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself." This is the Christian standard too—it was emphatically endorsed by Christ—and no higher or different standard has ever been suggested since. Looking back across the centuries to St. Paul's day and reckoning from him to men and women like Martin and Francis and Teresa and Dante and Wesley and



Elizabeth Fry and William Booth and Livingstone and Westcott, it is obvious that precisely those men and women who have come nearest to that standard have been the greatest benefactors of their human kind. But how to attain it—that is the difficulty. I want to be the best and do the best. So said the Jew, looking at God's Law. So said the Greek or the Roman, thinking of his greatest teachers, a Plato or a Seneca. So said the ordinary man, but being morally adrift on a sea of superstition the hope was a fond delusion. So say I, and so says every thoughtful reader of this immortal letter. But it cannot be done. I know the Law, but I don't obey it, said the conscientious Jew whose spokesman is the Apostle himself. I respect the ideal, but I have no moral energy to reach it, the honest Gentile might well have said. I've lost my ideal, and I'm sinking in a slough of despond, would have been the cry—if he thought at all—of the average man. In this respect the modern world is strangely like the ancient one.

For we too have our ideals, social as well as personal. The ideal of a family relationship between nations whereby war shall be banished and each people shall bring its contribution of gifts and service to the common weal ; the ideal of such a new co-operation in industry that strikes and lock-outs shall be relegated to the limbo of methods of barbarism ; the ideal of a simple and healthy community-life where there shall be no toleration for luxury on the one hand or poverty on the other. These are the ideals of growing multitudes, but in the last resort we come back to the attitude of the individual, his temper, his outlook, his relationship with his fellows, and therefore always and ultimately his relationship with God. In the end the inter-

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national problem, the industrial problem, the social problem, resolve themselves into the personal problem ; the problem of righteousness, how to be right with God, and right with man.

5

If there were no other reason for doing so, I must attend to this document because it faces this problem frankly. For it is the problem of my life, and of every life. In the letter, accordingly, the Apostle describes and contrasts two systems by which man may hope to solve the problem and attain this ideal. The first may be defined as the Way of Law, the second as the Way of Personal Devotion.¹ It was the pride of the Jews—and St. Paul admits that they had much to be proud of²—that to them God's Law had been entrusted,³ and that obedience to that Law was the chief end of man. Nor were those outside the pale of the chosen people left wholly unenlightened, for they at least could, if they would, discover something of God in the wonders of nature,⁴ or in the witness of conscience.⁵ Indeed there were other law-givers besides Moses, as anyone will realise who studies, for example, the pillars of the great Indian Emperor Asoka⁶ and the almost Christian precepts inscribed thereon, or the picture of the ideal State ■ drawn by Plato. The whole world, in fact, in St. Paul's view—and we can see its truth—identified religion with the observance of law in some form, ceremonial or moral. Only with Christ's coming did men begin to see the problem from ■ wholly new standpoint. For in this argument, contained in the first

1 vii. 6.

2 ii. 17-20.

3 iii. 1, 2.

■ i. 19, 20.

■ ii. 14, 15.

■ 250 B.C.

five chapters of the Epistle, the Apostle is writing his own spiritual biography. No one was prouder of his Jewish ancestry than he ; no greater enthusiast for the Law could have been found ; but just because his ideal was so high and his conscience so tender he failed to attain it. He only became the more miserable and the more hopeless. He was " kicking against the pricks " of his conscience in more senses than one, and it was only in the moments of that amazing scene on the outskirts of Damascus that he found deliverance. From that moment life for him became not merely tolerable, but wonderful. This experience reversed all his preconceived notions, unravelled his complex (as we should now say), and sent him forth with a wholly new centre for his emotions and a wholly new motive for his activity. The Epistle may almost be regarded as his carefully thought philosophy of that supreme turning-point in his career. This inner conflict is dramatically described in the famous seventh chapter, which, though it comes after the turning-point of the argument at the end of chapter five, is in reality a piece of autobiography in which everyone who has ever taken life seriously finds his own experience reproduced. We must all be grateful to the author for that " scene " —it sounds almost like a soliloquy on the stage—for it brings him down to our level. He is no stained-glass-window saint. Whatever stupendous heights of spiritual experience he scales in other parts of the treatise, we know that he starts from where we are. He is utterly human. He has explored that dismal abyss between the ideal and the actual, between intention and achievement. This indeed is the commonplace of life, and therefore of literature in every age. It would be difficult to find a more pictorial or poetical way of

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expressing the problem than the famous story of Ulysses and the sirens.¹ The doughty captain planned to be safe from the blandishments of the dread singers who sought to lure the careless mariner on to the rocks below. To this end he stuffed his sailors' ears with wax, and he had himself lashed to the mast. Thus he thought to be out of reach of the tiller by which he might be tempted to steer the ship to the fatal voices and the fatal rocks. But the Argonauts planned a better way. They invited Orpheus to their ship. With him on board and with his soul-stirring music they had no ears for the sirens. This old Greek myth excellently illustrates the alternative solutions of the problem which St. Paul puts before his readers. The first, the way of legal regulation, or the way of moral resolve as it might be called; the second is the way of a new relationship, and the sympathy in thought and conduct resulting therefrom. Judged by this first standard—obedience to law—the verdict for the whole race is Guilty. Even the Jew must confess that he has not practised what he preached, or what his vaunted law prescribed.² And the Gentile is no better.³ "No distinctions are drawn. All have sinned. All come short of the glory of God."⁴ "None is righteous. No, not one."⁵

In this direction then—through obedience to law—there is little hope of achieving righteousness, whether in the first century or in the twentieth. We must look to the other alternative—the Way of a Personal Devotion. It is to the unfolding of this new relationship, with all its consequences, here and hereafter, that the larger part of our precious document is devoted.

¹ I remember this illustration in a similar context in a book by the late revered teacher Dr. Stalker.

² ii. 17-29. ³ ii. 1-10. ⁴ iii. 23 (Moffatt's Trans.). ⁵ iii. 9-18.

§

It is assumed throughout the letter, and stated in its opening, that this relationship is ■ relationship with God Himself, made possible by His intervention—His appearance on the stage of history, in the person of Jesus Christ. This event, with all that it involves, was, and is, “the Gospel.”¹ It is a commonplace of experience that in matters of motive and conduct ■ personal relationship provides a far more powerful incentive than any code of law or rule, however admirable. Love for ■ woman, be she wife or mother, devotion to a friend, care for a child—these and similar feelings of attachment to ■ person are the real powers of life, and when these feelings are excited towards one who is God, not an unknown divinity, but the God who has unveiled Himself as Father, Saviour, Comforter, and has proved His love in the kind of actions which speak louder than words,² then these powers rise to their summit. For to respond to that love is to enter on the supreme relationship which is open to man ; it is to become a member of ■ new Family ; to be impelled by a new energy ; pledged to ■ new ideal of conduct ; destined to ■ new life over which death has no power.

Let me linger over each of these aspects of the new relationship, for not only have they transformed life for tens of thousands of ordinary mortals, but it is obvious that in a fresh understanding of them lies our best hope for that renewal of spiritual energy which is perhaps our nation's greatest need.

First comes the response to the “Gospel”—that is,

1. I-7.

2 v. 6-8.

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the love of God as exhibited in Christ, which St. Paul calls "faith."¹ This involves entrance into God's Family Circle,² and therefore ■ fresh beginning upon a higher plane of life. This entrance is at once effected and symbolised by Baptism, by which the child or the adult is welcomed into the Family and made ■ sharer in its life. St. Paul's philosophy of Baptism is extraordinarily impressive, not least in view of the almost casualness with which in some quarters that Sacrament is regarded and administered. For it brings us at once to one of the deepest centres of his thought and experience, namely, his and our oneness with Christ by virtue of membership in the Family Fellowship. In that circle He is supremely "Son." We also are "sons," and therefore sharers in His experience and receivers of His life. Indeed, in St. Paul's view, in His life and death and resurrection Christ the perfect Son threw upon the screen of history ■ picture of that love and sacrifice—life out of death—which is eternal in God and which must be in some sense reproduced in all the sons. He was predestined by God for holiness and service. So are they.³ For His sake the Father sees them as already sharers in His perfection. He takes the will for the deed. He looks to the end when at last, through the discipline of obedience to the Spirit, their transformation of character will be complete. This is the meaning of "justification." It is the Father dealing with His sons. He receives them, not for what they are, but for what He can make them. But if so, then the pilgrim's progress of the perfect Son must be reproduced in them. If He as their representative died on the Cross to all sin and selfishness, so must they. His experience must be reflected in

■ x. 8-15.

■ viii. 14-17.

■ viii. 29.

them.¹ If He, by God's energy, broke through death into a larger life, so must they, *morally now*, completely hereafter. Because of His love they give themselves to this daily death to selfishness in every form. Because of His life they live on a new plane of power. This energy is elsewhere described as, perhaps almost identified with, the Holy Spirit. He it was who was at work in the Resurrection.² He is the very Breath of Life³ in the Divine Community, the *Esprit de Corps*. He is the Friend and Guide of all the children.⁴ He gives them confidence to call God Father.⁵ If they respond to His leadership He will not only give them moral renewal, but physical renewal as well.⁶ He helps them in their prayers, and intercedes for them in their weakness.⁷ He is the Loving Energy of God. He makes His home not only in the Family Circle but in each of its members. Akin to this thought is the idea, ■ favourite one with St. Paul, that in Christ God originated ■ new race. We need not follow the Apostle's argument, learnt no doubt from his Rabbi in his early training, that Adam's sin tainted all his descendants, even apart from their own responsibility. We know only too well by sad experience this *damnosa hæreditas* of the human race. Every hospital and asylum, every police-court and prison, every inspection of our own record, bears ■ witness which cannot be contradicted. For the Christian the ancestry of Adam is counteracted by the ancestry of Christ. As humans we suffer from ■ moral blood-poisoning. But with Christ as ancestor, God and Man, there begins to flow into the veins of character ■ new and exhilarating force, ■ veritable *elixir vitæ*. The destruction of the old

¹ vi. 3-11.

■ i. 4.

³ viii. 1-9.

■ viii. 14.

■ viii. 15, 16.

■ viii. 11.

⁷ viii. 26, 27.

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poison begins ; a moral recovery takes place ; a fresh character begins to develop.

§

What are the features of that new character ? If the superb eighth chapter unveils the mysteries of life in the Spirit, the equally superb twelfth chapter shows the resultant behaviour on the ordinary levels of common duty. To me that chapter, with the one which follows, is the most perfect compendium of such Christian behaviour outside the Gospels. Every line is bracing and uplifting just because, unlike many modern standards, it is so far from being merely negative. Positive and almost aggressive in energy, sympathy, and loving service—such must the man be who fills this picture. Every virtue he possesses is social as well as personal. He is to be humble-minded,¹ realising that each member of that Body has his own gifts which he cultivates for the good of all.² These gifts, or some of the chief ones, are mentioned in turn³ ; each, like some peak touched with the sunshine, is enhanced by the enthusiasm which comes from the Spirit, an enthusiasm which lends itself, when need desires, to sympathy, generosity, steadfastness in trouble, perseverance in prayer, and which blossoms in flowers of hopefulness, earnestness, good-temper, and a rooted determination to overcome hostility with kindness and evil with good.⁴ Nor are the most practical and even irksome duties left out, for life in the Spirit includes the ready acknowledgment of political and civic responsibilities,⁵ the punctual payment of debts,⁶ in fact, the faithful discharge of every obligation except the obligation which can never be

¹ xii. 3.

■ xii. 9-21.

² xii. 4 ff.

⁵ xiii. 1-7.

³ xii. 6-8.

■ xiii. 8.

wholly discharged—"to love one another." This estimate of the consequences of life in the Spirit seems to me to be as penetrating as it is opportune. For we live in a day when evil is not always "loathed"; when, in some circles at least, hospitality is commercialised; when Church membership is thought to be compatible with unpaid bills and with a shirking of community-obligations, whether to the State or to the district; when social responsibility is only admitted in so far as it carries no interference with personal convenience. The fact is that a character as is here described can only be built on one foundation. No mere "moral resolution" will achieve it. It is the outcome of a personal relationship to a personal Christ. As He offered Himself, body and soul, so must His member offer himself,¹ and in so offering, be "conformed" by that ineffable contact to the disposition, the outlook, the purpose, of the Saviour Himself. Thus we come round again to the righteousness of God, whereby, going all lengths of sacrifice, in the tremendous redemptive actions of Bethlehem and Calvary, He accomplishes the righteousness of man. The problem is met full-face. Nothing is minimised. Nothing is shirked. The penalty of Sin is paid—the Apostle uses awe-ful words of "propitiation" and "blood" which we may neither fathom nor criticise. Suffice it to say God intervened. The problem was solved. Potentially solved in its completeness for those who meet that Love with their love, the devotion of that dear Life with the devotion of their lives; and who, abandoning themselves to the domination of that Spirit, find the actual solution as day by day they yield themselves to His obedience.

¹ xii. 1, 2.

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5

I have endeavoured to call my reader's attention to some of the aspects of this document which he may well ponder and which are at least ■ suggestive in the twentieth century as they were in the first. Most remarkable of all, perhaps, is what in these days would be called St. Paul's "world-outlook," his "philosophy of history"—to use a more sober and scholarly phrase. Like many moderns, he finds himself beset by difficulties ■ he confronts the tangled state of the world and seeks to discover some threads of principle and of purpose. To begin with, his personal knowledge of Christ ■ the exhibition of the character of God gives him an unshakable assurance that God—that God—is in control, that He is infinitely and intimately concerned about the men whom He has called into being, and that, despite all appearances to the contrary, He has ■ plan and ■ purpose which ultimately He will accomplish. God was "in the world" from the beginning. Through "chosen" nations, and especially the chosen nation, His education of mankind went forward. Men learned the truth about Him and about life as they were able, and willing, to receive it. They were not always willing to receive it. Particularly was this true of St. Paul's own nation at the time of his writing. We can almost hear his laments ■ he contemplates what he evidently regards ■ the supreme tragedy of contemporary history—the rejection by his countrymen of their own Messiah and the refusal thereby of their vocation for service to mankind. But this is no isolated tragedy of nationhood, though it is the most famous instance. Modern instances of ■ nation preferring its own pride and prejudice to unselfish service are not far to seek. It is extraordinarily interesting to note the

way in which the Apostle meets the situation. To this he devotes a large and famous section of the letter, chapters nine to eleven. His anchor is God's purpose. To this he holds, and to the conviction that even what looks like black tragedy can be made ultimately to subscribe that purpose. The loss of the chosen nation, he says in effect, is the gain of the other nations. As Christ Himself said, the privileged ones have failed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and the unprivileged ones are flocking in. Yet this gives them nothing to boast of. God has not gone back on His choice or withdrawn His offer. The time will come when, like the son in the parable, they will "come to themselves." And "if their exclusion means that the world is reconciled to God, what will their admission mean? Why, it will be life from the dead."¹ In other words, according to the Apostle, God's purpose is not balked. Even the sins and mistakes of men can be compelled to minister to its accomplishment. With our limited powers of observation and knowledge we cannot expect to understand in the light of the moment events and movements whose issue none but God can foresee. Whether in the world at large or in the individual life, God is at work for its progress. To co-operate is salvation, to refuse is loss, terrible, and it may be irreparable, but not the loss of the Purpose. That remains. Defying all that would frustrate it, there is—

One God, one law, one Element,
And one far-off Divine Event
To which the whole creation moves.

And what ■ *dénouement* that will be! Not only man, but nature will share in it. For here, almost alone in his writings, St. Paul conjoins the final Redemption of

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Man with the entrance of nature—indeed the whole universe—into an era of unexampled splendour.¹ In these days, when nature is marvellously yielding her secrets to man, when the appreciation of her glories, seen and unseen, is more widespread than ever before, this declaration is peculiarly welcome. A great Renovation of the Universe—including man—is planned. But for each of us it can begin, it must begin, here and now, as the Spirit of Order and Beauty and Goodness has His way in the lives which are open to His rule. Most modern therefore in its outlook is this document. It moves in time, but it lifts us into eternity. It deals with man as he is, at his worst, as well as at his best, and it unveils man as he can be, ■■ God intends him to be, as in Christ he will be. It invites to ■ faith which, so far from credulity, finds its foundation in the fact of Christ, in whom God's character, God's purpose, and man's destiny are alike made manifest. In its pages Christ is not merely the historic Figure of the past; He is the supreme contemporary factor in the present. His Spirit invigorates the Brotherhood which is His Body and energises in the life of each member both here and hereafter. And the Plan emerges as the letter proceeds: a higher evolution; the evolution of the divine-human family, adopted as God's sons, infused with His life, and reproducing His likeness; exhibiting, that is, the highest standard of moral excellence in every phase of life, political, civic, social, personal. A Family whose members learn to face every difficulty and confront every calamity with an unbroken assurance of the love of God, and to look beyond the "cross accidents" of the moment, whether in the history of their times or in personal experience of the moment,

¹ viii. 18-23.

to a consummation and climax when the great Renovation shall be complete. And all this is seen to be the product, not of men's aspirations or idealism, but of an Act of God, whereby, in life and death, He crushed the death-dealing forces of sin and infused new life into the race. Here indeed is a philosophy which makes life worth living. By its means millions have found the answers to their problems, have found God, and in finding God have found themselves. For the seekers after truth in the twentieth century the Epistle to the Romans is a book to be read.

The Epistle to the Romans is the masterpiece of the New Testament, and the purest gospel, which can never be too much read or studied, and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes.—LUTHER.

The great philosophical Epistle, which was most appropriately addressed to the capital of the civilised world.—SANDAY.

The Epistle to the Romans has ever been regarded ■ first in importance among the Epistles of St. Paul, the corner-stone of that Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles.—B. JOWETT.

A Christian philosophy of universal history.

THOLUCK.

The Epistle to the Romans and the Gospel of John are the keys of the New Testament. Cardinal Pole answered well to him that demanded what course should be taken in reading this Epistle: "First," saith he, "begin at the twelfth chapter and read to the end and practise the precepts, then set upon the former part."—E. LEIGH.

At every word we feel ourselves face to face with the unfathomable.—GODET.

The most profound book in existence.—COWPER.

When St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians he gave prominence to wisdom, for the Greeks sought after wisdom. But Rome was the city of imperial law, and the great seat of jurisprudence and government. It was therefore fitting that to Jews and Gentiles residing there should be addressed this demonstration of the position of mankind as transgressors condemned by Divine law and justice.—D. FRASER.

This is St. Paul's *magnum opus*. Here we see him ■ his greatest ■ ■ constructive thinker and theologian.

G. G. FINDLAY.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Drawn from many
sources to illustrate
the great Texts and
Teaching of the Book

SENECA was a contemporary of *St. Paul*. Before the Apostle's letter reached the Romans, this great pagan philosopher, with words that bear a strange likeness to the moral sentiments of the Epistle, had turned the thoughts of his fellow-countrymen to the needs of the soul. He discovered the problem which *St. Paul* set out to solve. After *Seneca*, another pagan preacher, *EPICETUS*, a freed slave in the Imperial City, but a man of eminent character and ability, made an even more spirited appeal for morality and virtue. He went beyond *Seneca* in founding a school for the healing of diseased souls. Thus the subject of this letter was a live theme of discussion in the Gentile world, and the writings of these preachers of natural righteousness, which are herein quoted, offer excellent proof of the Apostle's argument.

Within the Church certain names are inseparably associated with the interpretation of this Epistle. There are the reformers of the sixteenth century who rediscovered the gospel of righteousness by faith; *LUTHER*, *MELANCHTHON*, *CALVIN*, and the English *DEAN COLET*, whose preaching promoted the Reformation in England, and to whose love of learning *St. Paul's School* owes its origin. There are scholars like *BENJAMIN JOWETT*, the Master of Balliol, Oxford, who through independent study have reached conclusions for which they have been persecuted. Quotations from such writers are not excluded from the following pages, for whoever has made a sincere and scholarly inquiry into the meaning of the profound statements of this Epistle deserves attention. Throughout the Notes and Comments different points of view and of emphasis are appreciated, but the main line of interpretation that has been followed is represented by the studies of *WILLIAM SANDAY*, whose critical researches, spiritual sympathy, and sound judgment have made him one of the foremost Christian scholars of our age.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

THE SALUTATION

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God . . .

Rom. I. 1.

THERE is not a grander thing in literature than the opening of the Epistle to the Romans.—ALFORD.

The opening verses of this Epistle form a close and living union with the preceding book, in which we have known St. Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, his calling to be an Apostle, his separation to the Gospel of God, and have left him at its close testifying to the Gospel in Rome itself. Here the Apostle seems to stand before us as he did in the previous history, firmly holding his ground in the prophetic and historic line of the Old Covenant, and from that standpoint opening the dispensation of the Spirit, which has its source and its pledge in the Resurrection, and claiming all nations for the obedience of faith.—F. D. BERNARD.

Other men in the beginning of their epistles, especially those which they addressed to the Roman people, recited their own titles as rulers, kings, or conquerors ; but the Apostles claimed to be heard as bondsmen—bondsmen of Jesus Christ.

BP. WORDSWORTH.

When St. Paul speaks to God, or of God, he raises himself and his readers to heaven by the sublimest contemplations.—GREGORY.

The other Apostles had been trained by long intercourse with Jesus, and at first had been called to be followers and disciples, and had been afterwards advanced to the apostleship. St. Paul, who had been formerly a persecutor, by a call became suddenly—without the preparatory stage of discipleship—an Apostle. While Christ is calling a man, He makes him

Rom.—C

THE STUDY BIBLE

what He calls him to be, and that, too, quickly. The root or origin of the term Pharisee was the same ■■ that of the word "separated"; but in this passage Paul intimates that he was separated by God not only from men, from the Jews, and from the disciples, but also from human teachers.—BENGEL.

One of the most certain marks of the Divine call is, when it is the purpose of a man's heart to live, to labour, and to possess nothing, but for Jesus Christ and His Church.—QUESNEL.

St. Paul rejects all human authority in matters of faith and duty, and yet professes the most absolute subjection of conscience and reason to the authority of Jesus Christ.—HODGE.

In the word "separated" he seems to allude to his former separation when he lived ■ Pharisee—separated from all ceremonial defilement, and from the people who observed not the exact rules of legal purity; saying, that he was separated now, not to a nicer observation of Jewish rites and customs, but to the preaching of the Gospel of God.—WHITBY.

He calls it the "Gospel of God" to cheer the hearer at the outstart. For he came not with tidings to make the countenance sad, as did the prophets, with their accusations, and charges, and reproofs, but with glad tidings—countless treasures of abiding and unchangeable blessings.—CHRYSOSTOM.

It is elsewhere styled "the Gospel of Christ." It is the Gospel of God, as He was the author and contriver of it: it is the Gospel of Christ, as He is the subject-matter and scope of it. Indeed St. Paul sometimes calls it his Gospel, because he was the dispenser and promulger of it: it was a Divine treasure committed to his care and trust.—BURKITT.

THE SALUTATION

THE ROMANS

*To all that are in Rome,
beloved of God, called to be
saints: Grace to you and
peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rom. I. 7.

THESE epithets, high-sounding as they are, if applied by a modern writer to a modern Church would seem to be indiscriminating or conventional, but as coming from St. Paul they have not yet lost their freshness and reality. They correspond to no actual condition of things, but to that ideal condition in which all Christians, by the mere fact of their being Christians, are supposed to be.—SANDAY.

Men are not called by God because they are already holy; but they are made holy because they are called.

AUGUSTINE.

It were well if all that are called saints were saints indeed.—HENRY.

Neither were they saints only, but saints of the first rank and magnitude, heroes in the faith. "Your faith is spoken of throughout the world." Their faith made Rome no less the metropolis of Christianity than of the world. The Roman faith and fortitude equally spread their fame. As the pagan Romans overcame the world by their fortitude, so did the Christians by their faith.

SOUTH.

There is a living, literal communion of saints, wide as the world itself, and as the history of the world.

CARLYLE.

As Peace is a choice blessing, so this is the choicest Peace. It is the peculiar, inseparable effect of this Grace, with which it is here jointly wished—grace and peace; the flower of peace, growing upon the root of grace.—LEIGHTON.

THE GREEKS AND BARBARIANS

*I am debtor both to Greeks
and to Barbarians, both to
the wise and to the foolish.*

Rom. I. 14.

THIS division into Greeks and Barbarians comprehends the entire Gentile world. There follows another division, alike to the wise and to the unwise ; for there were fools even among the Greeks, and also wise men even among the Barbarians. To all, he says, I am debtor, by virtue of my Divine commission to all, as being the servant of all. Though men excel in wisdom or in power, the Gospel is still necessary to them ; and others besides the wise and powerful are not excluded.—BENGEL.

By this phrase the Apostle merely means “to all mankind, no matter what their nationality or culture.” The classification is exhaustive. It must be remembered that the Greeks called all who did not speak their language “Barbarians,” and the Apostle, writing from Greece, adopts their point of view. The Gospel was at first most readily received by the poor and unlearned, but it did not therefore follow that culture and education were by any means excluded. St. Paul himself was a conspicuous instance to the contrary.—SANDAY.

The Son of Man rises above the parentage, the blood, the narrow horizon which bounded as it seemed His human Life ; He is the Archetypal Man in whose presence distinctions of race, intervals of ages, types of civilisation, degrees of mental culture, are as nothing.

LIDDON.

The philosopher will make it his business to debate with all mankind ; with the Athenians, Corinthians, and Romans equally ; not about taxes and revenues, or peace and war, but about happiness and misery, prosperity and adversity, slavery and freedom.—EPICTETUS.

THE GOSPEL

ITS GLORY

*I am not ashamed of the
gospel . . .*

Rom. I. 16.

WHAT sayest thou, O Paul? When it were fitting to say, "I boast, and am proud, and luxuriate in it"; thou sayest not this, but what is less than this, that thou art not ashamed, which is not what we usually say of things very glorious. What then is this which he says, and why does he thus speak, while yet he exults over it more than over heaven? The Romans were most eager about the things of the world—their riches, their empire, their victories, their kings. Since Paul was going to preach Jesus, who was thought to be the carpenter's son, who had no bodyguard, who was not encircled in wealth, and who even died as a culprit, and as it was likely that they did not know as yet any of the unspeakable and great things, the Apostle says, "I am not ashamed," having still to teach them.

CHRYSOSTOM.

In the magnificent capital of the world, in a city where all the schools of Grecian philosophy had their representatives, it might well appear hopeless to preach the crucified Son of God, a Master who could only promise His disciples death and suffering as far as this world was concerned.—OLSHAUSEN.

How handsome is the passage! He was ready to preach the Gospel at Rome, though a place where the Gospel was run down by those that called themselves the wits. I reckon him a Christian indeed, that is neither ashamed of the Gospel, nor ■ shame to it.

HENRY.

THE STUDY BIBLE

ITS CHARACTER

*For it is the power of God
unto salvation to every one
that believeth . . .*

Rom. I. 16.

AS Paul sums up the Gospel in this Epistle, so he sums up the Epistle in this and the following verse.

BENGEL.

The Gospel, which is the greatest example of the Power of God, he strikingly calls that Power itself. But not only is the Gospel the great example of Divine Power ; it is the field of agency of the power of God, working in it, and interpenetrating it throughout—the highest and holiest vehicle of the Divine Power. This is the weighty difference between the Gospel and the Law, for the Law is never called God's power, but light, or teaching, in which a man must walk. The direction in which this power acts in the Gospel is healing, saving power.—ALFORD.

Eternal life is potentially in the word preached, ■ the harvest is potentially in the seed.—TRAPP.

The Gospel is set forth as ■ mighty efflux and emanation of life and spirit freely issuing forth from an omnipotent source of grace and love, as that true godlike vital influence whereby the Divinity derives itself into the souls of men, enlivening and transforming them into its own likeness, and strongly imprinting upon them ■ copy of its own beauty and goodness. Briefly, it is that whereby God comes to dwell in us, and we in Him.—JOHN SMITH.

The Gospel does not save him who only reads, hears, or remembers it, but him who receives, loves, and practises it by a lively faith.—QUESNEL.

As God's power it effects with certainty what it promises.—HOFMANN.]

ITS COMPREHENSIVENESS

To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom. I. 16.

THIS is the Jewish expression for all mankind, as "Greeks and Barbarians" is the Greek one. "Greeks" here include all Gentiles. Not that the Jew had any preference under the Gospel; only he inherits, and has a precedence.—ALFORD.

The "first" is an honour in order of time only. He has no advantage as that of receiving greater righteousness, but is only honoured in respect of his receiving it first. Yet the first does not receive more than the second, nor he than the person after him, but all enjoy the same gifts. The "first," then, here, is an honour in word, not a superiority in grace.—CHRYSOSTOM.

It cannot be sufficiently admired how skilfully, to avoid offending those of his own nation, St. Paul here enters into an argument so unpleasing to the Jews, as this of persuading them that the Gentiles had as good a title to be taken in to be the people of God under the Messiah as they themselves.—LOCKE.

Heaven's gate is no wider open to a Jew than to a Grecian. The sun of the Gospel, as of the world, is not confined to lighten Judea only, but shines universally.—ADAMS.

The Gospel alone of all so-called faiths overleaps all geographical limits, and lives in all centuries. It alone wins its trophies and bestows its gifts on all sorts and conditions of men.—MACLAREN.

These few words, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," are the sign that a new æon has dawned upon the world.—FARRAR.

THE STUDY BIBLE

ITS CONTENTS

*For therein is revealed ■
righteousness of God . . .*

Rom. I. 17.

THE expression “righteousness of God,” instead of being confined to one abstract point of view or meaning, seems to swell out into several : the attribute of God, embodied in Christ, manifested in the world, revealed in the Gospel, communicated to the individual ; the righteousness not of the law, but of faith.—JOWETT.

It sometimes signifies that righteousness by which God Himself is righteous, acts righteously, and is acknowledged to be righteous ; and also that righteousness,—when applied to men,—in which grace and mercy also are included, and which is shown principally in the condemnation of sin, and in the justification of the sinner. It sometimes signifies that righteousness by which a man, in consequence of the gift of God, becomes righteous, and is righteous ; and that, too, either by laying hold of the righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith, or by imitating the righteousness of God, in the practice of virtue, and in the performance of good works.

The righteousness of faith is called the “righteousness of God” by Paul, when he is speaking of justification ; because God has originated and prepared it, reveals and bestows it, approves and crowns it with completion. In this passage, the “righteousness of God” denotes the entire scheme of beneficence of God in Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the sinner.—BENGEL.

Therein God had been pleased to reveal not only the righteousness of His perfect character and government, and the righteousness of His holy law, but that also which He hath appointed for the justification of sinners before Him. This might be called the righteous-

ness of God, for it was the perfect obedience unto death, of the glorious Person who is God manifest in the flesh.—SCOTT.

I saw the Apostle's meaning, that by the Gospel is made known that righteousness which avails with God, in which God, out of mere mercy, makes us righteous through faith. On this I felt as if I was wholly born anew. The precious Scripture now appeared quite another thing to me. I ran quickly through the whole Bible, and collected all that it says on the subject. And thus, ■ I had hated the expression, "God's righteousness," I began dearly to love it as the gladdest word in Scripture; and that passage became to me the very gate of heaven.—LUTHER.

This verse sticks in Luther's memory. He wanders through the convent, he trudges it to Rome, he crawls up Pilate's staircase, but still the sentence is sounding in his ear. Through seas of anguish and dismay he buffets his labouring path, no ray to guide him but this tiny spark, till all at once, at that little spark Luther's soul is kindled, and the Reformation beacon flames.—JAMES HAMILTON.

The Greek word for "righteousness" and its Hebrew equivalent are taken sometimes for "virtue" and "piety" which men possess or strive after—sometimes imputatively, for "freedom from blame" or "justification."—DE WETTE.

The burden of the word is not primarily a question of character or conduct, but of status; the restoring of the right relationship between man and God—of clearing the ground for the restoration of Divine fellowship.—OLDWAY.

Compare Dr. Moffatt's note, pp. 132-3.

THE STUDY BIBLE

ITS CARDINAL PRINCIPLE

By faith unto faith . . .

Rom. I. 17.

IT is by faith that man first lays hold on the Gospel, and its latest product is a heightened and intensified faith. Apart from faith, the Gospel remains null and void for the individual. It is not realised. But when it has been once realised and taken home to the man's self, its tendency is to confirm and strengthen that very faculty by which it was apprehended.—SANDAY.

From faith (as ■ root) unto faith (as the tree) St. Paul enters on his great argument concerning faith. By adding "unto faith" he guards against the supposition that the Christian life consists only in the root, and shows that it is continually growing with fresh increments from the small seed to greater altitude and vigour, putting forth new leaves and branches, and bringing forth new fruit in due season.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

Either (a) beginning and ending in faith, like "changed from glory to glory," "going from strength to strength"; that is, springing faith and producing faith, going from one stage of faith to another; or (b) revealed by faith to those that have faith; for whoso hath, to him shall be given.—B. JOWETT.

Faith is ■ vital principle of constant growth, receiving grace for grace, going from strength to strength, till it is transformed from glory to glory. But in all the stages of growth the vital principle is the same, from or out of faith as the root, unto faith as the blossom and fruit; the all in all—the beginning, the middle, and the end.—SCHAFF.

ITS CONFIRMATION

*As it is written . . .**Rom. I. 17.*

THE Talmudists very often appeal to Scripture in the same way, by the formula,

“as it is written.” It is not necessary in all cases of this nature that the writer who makes an appeal regards the passage which he quotes as a prediction. In this case the passage which follows was not originally designed to describe the Gospel justification by faith; for plainly the connection in which it stands does not admit of this specific meaning. But it involves the same principle as that for which the Apostle is contending, namely, that “the means of safety is confidence or trust in the Divine declaration,” faith which works by love. The prophet Habakkuk sees in prophetic vision “troublous times” coming upon Judea; and he exclaims, “The pious man shall be saved by his confidence or faith” in God. It was not, then, by relying on his own merit or desert that safety could be had; it was to be obtained only in the way of believing and obeying the Divine declarations. Now, the very same principle of action was concerned in so doing at this time, which is concerned with the faith and salvation of the Gospel. Of course the Apostle might appeal to this declaration of Habakkuk, as serving to confirm the principle for which he contended.—STUART.

This golden principle of Old Testament theology—given here exactly as in the Hebrew, except that there it is “by his faith”—is thrice quoted in the New Testament, showing that the Gospel way of “life by faith,” so far from subverting or disturbing, only takes up and develops the one way of “life” from the beginning.

D. BROWN.

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ITS CONCLUSION

The righteous shall live by faith.

Rom. I. 17.

THE conclusion of Habakkuk is indeed the beginning of Christ's proper doctrine.—DAVISON.

This has been understood two ways : (a) that the just or righteous man cannot live ■ holy and useful life without exercising continual faith ; (b) that the words of the original text should be " The just by faith, shall live " ; that is, he alone that is justified by faith shall live.—A. CLARKE.

Perhaps St. Paul intended the words " by faith " to be taken rather with " the just " than ■ they stand in the English version. " The just by faith," or " the man whose righteousness is based on faith," shall live.

The Apostle uses the word " faith " in his own peculiar and pregnant sense. But this is naturally led up to by the way in which it was used by Habakkuk. The intense personal trust and reliance which the Jew felt in the God of his fathers is directed by the Christian to Christ, and is further developed into an active energy of devotion.

" Faith," ■ understood by St. Paul, is not merely head-belief, a purely intellectual process such ■ that of which St. James spoke when he said, " The devils also believe and tremble " ; neither is it merely " trust," ■ passive dependence upon an Unseen Power ; but it is ■ further stage of feeling developed out of these, a current of emotion setting strongly in the direction of its object, an ardent and vital apprehension of that object, and a firm and loyal attachment to it.

SANDAY.

Into the words " faith " and " life " Paul infuses ■ significance which he had learnt from revelation. Faith in its lowest stage is the being theoretically persuaded of God's favour to us in Christ on higher grounds than those of sensuous perception and ordinary experience, namely, because we have confidence in God. In a higher stage it has touched the inmost emotions of the heart, and has become a trustful acceptance of the gift of favour offered by God, ■ self-surrender of the heart to the favourable will of God as it presents itself to us in the word of reconciliation. But it has ■ higher stage even than this, in which it attains ■ mystical depth, and becomes ■ mystical incorporation with Christ in ■ unity of love and life—a practical acquaintance with Christ, which completes itself by personal appropriation of His life and death. In its final and richest development it has risen from the passive attitude of receptivity into a spontaneous active force—a living impulse and power of good in every phase of personal life. Faith in this full range of Pauline meaning is both a single act and a progressive principle. As a single act it is the self-surrender of the soul to God, the laying hold of Christ. As a progressive principle it is the renewal of the personal life in sanctification.—FARRAR.

The just man shall live by his faith, if his faith itself live ; otherwise how shall that which is itself death, give life ?—BERNARD.

The Apostle's expression must be construed, " The man who is justified by faith, shall live." Paul had ■ good reason to put this meaning into the prophetic expression ; since, the just man, if he would live by faith, must have been justified by faith.—MEYER.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

UNGODLINESS

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness . . .

Rom. I. 18.

THIS verse contains a deep and awful truth. God's punishment is God's wrath against sin ; and is not merely the consequence of lifeless laws, but the expression of the feeling of a living spirit. It

would be most perilous to do away with these words ; for if the wrath of God be only a figure, His love must be but a figure too.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

The righteousness and the wrath of God form, in some measure, an antithesis. The righteousness of the world crushes the guilty individual ; the righteousness of God crushes beneath it the sin, and restores the sinner.—BENGEL.

To "hold the truth in unrighteousness" means to keep it down in ungodliness, as in a prison-house. Men have incarcerated the Truth, and hold her a captive under restraint and duress, with the bars and bolts of a depraved will and vicious habits, so that she cannot go forth and breathe the air, and see the light, and do works suitable to her own nature.

BP. WORDSWORTH.

The terms "ungodliness" and "unrighteousness" overlap and include each other by a large margin ; the specific difference being that "ungodliness" is more the fountain, and "unrighteousness" more the result. "Unrighteousness" is the state of the thoughts and feelings and habits induced originally by forgetfulness of God, and in its turn inducing impieties of all kinds. Men, possessing enough of the germs of religious and moral truth to preserve them from abandonment, have checked the development of this truth in their lives, in the love and practice of sin.—ALFORD.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

IGNORANCE

For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity ; that they may be without excuse . . .

Rom. I. 20.

is a good God ! ” God is seen in the creature and in nature, as by reflection ; but in the Word and in the Scriptures, directly.—DONNE.

God has two books in which men may read His attributes—the Book of Nature, and the Book of Scripture ; and He has two Temples in which He is to be worshipped—the World and the Church.

The words “ from the creation of the world ” may signify : (a) from the time of the Creation, or (b) from the structure and fabric of the world. The meaning is that God “ never left Himself without a witness ”—ever since the Creation men have had clear evidence of God in His works.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

The prophet saith, “ The heavens declare the glory of God.” What will the Greeks say in that day ? That “ we were ignorant of Thee ” ? Did ye then not hear the heavens sending forth a voice by the light, while the well-ordered harmony of all things spake out more clearly than a trumpet ? Did ye not see the hours of day and night abiding unmoved continually, the goodly order of winter, spring, and the other seasons, which is both sure and unmoved, the orderliness of the

THE Schools call the earth “ the chariot of the creature,” by which we may be carried up to heaven.

FARINGDON.

He is inexcusable that considers not God in the creature ; that, coming into a fair garden, says only, “ Here is a good gardener ! ” and not “ Here

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sea amid all its turbulence and waves? All things abiding in order, and by their beauty and their grandeur preaching aloud of the Creator? It was not to bereave men of all excuse that He set before them so great a system of teaching, but that they might come to know Him. But by not having recognised Him, they deprive themselves of every excuse.—CHRYSOSTOM.

He means to say that God manifested to man by this fabric of the world, which is the work of His hands, those things which in God are invisible—His goodness, His Truth, and His Justice.—DE VALDÉS.

For “Godhead” read rather “Godhood,” that property of Divineness which belongs to Him who called this creation into being. Two things are thus said to be clearly discovered to the reflecting intelligence by the things which are made—first, that there is an Eternal Power; and, secondly, that this is neither a blind physical “Force” nor a pantheistic “spirit of nature,” but a living, conscious Divine Person, whose outgoing energy is beheld in the external universe. And, what is eminently worthy of notice, the outward creation is here represented, not as the parent, but only as the interpreter, of our faith in God. This faith has its primary sources within our own breast; but it becomes an intelligent and articulate conviction only through what we observe around us. Thus are the inner and outer revelations of God just the complement of each other, making up between them one universal and immovable conviction that God is.

D. BROWN.

The meaning of the Apostle is, that the order, contrivance, and design displayed in the creation prove with certainty that there is more in nature than what we really see; and that amongst the invisible things

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

of the universe there is a Being, the Author and Origin of all this contrivance and design ; and by consequence, a Being of stupendous power, and of wisdom and knowledge incomparably exalted above any wisdom or knowledge which we see in man ; and that He stands in the same relation to us as the maker does to the thing made.—PALEY.

This entire moral and visible world from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and its moon, its sowing and its harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, a great teaching of supersensuous truth, a help at once to our faith and to our understanding.—TRENCH.

O Heavens ! is it, in very deed, He then that speaks through thee, that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me ?—CARLYLE.

The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world.—EMERSON.

There is nothing so great or so goodly in creation, but it is a mean symbol of the Gospel of Christ, and of the things that He has prepared for them that love Him.—RUSKIN.

God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but on trees and flowers, clouds and stars.—LUTHER.

God who is invisible to mortal eyes is seen by His works.—ARISTOTLE.

The supreme God holds Himself invisible, and it is only in His works that we are capable of admiring Him.

ZENOPHON.

God the Eternal, the chief Ruler of the universe and its Creator, the mind alone beholds ; but that which is produced we behold by sight.—PLATO.

Rom.—D

IMPENITENCE

Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Rom. II. 4.

IT is ■ wilful and guilty ignorance, not merely an inconsiderateness, which is blamed in the question.

ALFORD.

The end and design of all the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God towards sinners is to engage them to love and serve their Benefactor; and thereby to lead them to repentance: the undue return which sinners too often make to God is to despise the riches of His goodness and long-suffering, by being unthankful for it, by not improving it, by misimproving or sinning against it.—BURKITT.

As the beam of the sun shining on fire doth discourage its burning, so the shining of God's mercies on us should dishearten and extinguish our evil desires. This is so needful a duty that Peter picks this flower out of Paul's garden, as one of the choicest, and urgeth it upon those to whom he writes.—2 Peter iii. 15.

TRAPP.

He who sins and does not repent speedily does at least sin twice.—J. TAYLOR.

God leads pleasantly : does not compel by necessity.

BENGEL.

God, knowing how large ■ portion of virtue each soul carries with it from Himself, and how strong is the inborn nobility, and how being corrupted by its mode of life and bad company it acts contrary to its original nature, and then, in some cases, being healed, it re-acquires the principles which are suitable to it,—God, I say, does not hasten to inflict punishment.

PLUTARCH.

THE JUDGMENT

OUR WORKS

*Who will render to every man
according to his works . . .*

Rom. II. 6.

THE word translated "will render" means not only "will give," but "will repay."

BENGEL.

This retribution must be carefully kept in its place in the argument. The Apostle is here speaking generally of the general system of God in governing the world,—the judging according to each man's works—punishing the evil, and rewarding the righteous. No question at present arises how this righteousness in God's sight is to be obtained—but the truth is only stated broadly at present, to be further specified by and by, when it is clearly shown that by fulfilling the law no flesh can be justified before God. The neglect to observe this has occasioned two mistakes: (1) an idea that by this passage it is proved that not faith only, but works also in some measure, justify before God, and (2) an idea that by good deeds here is meant faith in Christ. However true it be, so much is certainly not meant here, but merely the fact, that everywhere, and in all, God punishes evil, and rewards good.

ALFORD.

The supposition that there is a great difficulty here, and an apparent contradiction between this sentence and the doctrine of justification by faith, is a remarkable indication of an inadequate view of works on one hand, and of justification by faith on the other. In the Kingdom of perfect love the antagonism of merit and grace disappears in a higher unity of both. It is observable that, with the Apostle, all the ideas of the Old Testament become more profound, and are made perfect: the Law becomes the Law of the Spirit; work becomes the work of faith; righteousness becomes

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justifying righteousness; retribution becomes free, rewarding love.

The embarrassment of commentators on the sense of this verse gives evidence of timid and narrow views on the doctrine of justification. The seekers, who are portrayed in verses 7 and 10, will never think seriously of relying upon their works before God, because they are in a gravitation toward the Eternal, which will find rest only when they see God in Christ, either in this or the other world. But the opposite class—whose principle of life is party spirit, and reliance upon temporal association—place their confidence in their own achievements, even when they reject the doctrine of good works. For, besides the righteousness of works, there is also a righteousness of doctrine, of orthodoxy, ■ righteousness of the letter, ■ righteousness of negation and protest, which have, in common with the righteousness of works, the fundamental characteristics of party righteousness.—LANGE.

The Apostle notes the quality, not the proportion of their works—that is, good works shall be rewarded with glory, and evil with punishment.—E. LEIGH.

The questions concerning justification, personal election, and efficacious grace should be kept distinct from those which relate to character and conduct. If ■ man aspires after “glory, honour, and immortality”; if he seeks this inheritance, by faith in the promises of God, and “patient continuance in well-doing”; he doubtless is in the way of eternal life. But if men contend against the precepts and sanction of God’s law, and His decrees and dispensations, His truths and ordinances, or blame anything rather than their own sins; no doubt they are in the broad way of destruction.—T. SCOTT.

THE JUDGMENT

UNDER THE LAW

As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law : and ■ many ■ have sinned under law shall be judged by law . . .

Rom. II. 12.

ment of justification by faith.—THOLUCK.

Behind the concrete representation—the Mosaic law itself—St. Paul sees an imperious principle, an overwhelming presence, antagonistic to grace, to liberty, to spirit, and (in some aspects) even to life—abstract law, which, though the Mosaic ordinances are its most signal and complete embodiment, nevertheless is not exhausted therein, but exerts its crushing power over the conscience in diverse manifestations. The one, the concrete and special, is “the Law”; the other, the abstract and universal, is law.—LIGHTFOOT.

Whoever came into the world without an innate idea of good and evil, fair and base, becoming and unbecoming, happiness and misery, proper and improper, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done ?—EPICTETUS.

I am of the opinion that the gods have given these unwritten laws to men.—XENOPHON.

Laws not written, but surer than all written laws.

DEMOSTHENES.

There is naturally ■ general sense of right and wrong, which all feel by intuition, even though there be no intercourse, and no arrangement has ever existed among them.—ARISTOTLE.

THE UNWRITTEN LAW

*When Gentiles which have ■
law do by nature the things
of the law . . .*

Rom. II. 14.

THE Apostle, in the narrow compass of two verses, explains what the law, or religion, of nature is. It is ■ self-law, or the work of the law written in the heart. And therefore it has its foundation in the reason, understanding, or heart of all mankind, and is common to all nations: and it agrees with those things which are written in the Law of God. Herein the mind of man harmonises with the mind and will of God; the spark of reason in man shows the same light in his narrow sphere, ■ the immense ocean of intelligence in the Father of Light.

He demonstrates the real existence of the law or religion of nature by three solid arguments: (a) the virtuous actions of some heathens; (b) the force of conscience; and (c) the mutual accusations or vindications of conduct. Therefore there is a law of nature, which is sufficient to bring a man, who has no other light, to eternal happiness.

But, it may be asked, if the law of nature be so sufficient, what occasion is there for the Gospel? No law, or light, how sufficient soever in itself to save mankind, when duly attended to, is sufficient to reform them, when they daily neglect and pervert it. Furthermore, to despise or disregard any discoveries of God's will and goodness, to neglect any scheme which He has formed to promote virtue and happiness, especially such ■ glorious and noble scheme as is revealed in the Gospel, is foolish, wicked, and ■ capital transgression of the law of nature.—I. TAYLOR.

THE JUDGMENT

THE GREAT DAY

*In the day when God shall
judge the secrets of men,
according to my gospel, by
Jesus Christ.*

Rom. II. 16.

THIS is the Day that must make good that great attribute of God, His justice ; that must reconcile those unanswerable doubts that torment the wisest understandings, and reduce those seeming inequalities and respective distributions in this world to an equality and recompensive Justice in the next. This is that one Day that shall include and comprehend all that went before it, wherein as in the last scene all the actors must enter, to complete the great piece. This is the Day whose memory hath only power to make us honest in the dark and to be virtuous without a witness.

SIR T. BROWNE.

There are two great days in which the fate of all the world is transacted. This life is man's day, in which man does what he pleases, and God holds His peace. But then God shall have His day too, in which He shall speak and no man shall answer.—J. TAYLOR.

On that day the higher harmony which rules all discords shall be revealed ; the wrong shall either be set right before our eyes, or shall be shown never to have been wrong, but only to have been misunderstood. At present we live with good and with evil, which none knows except the man himself, and even he but imperfectly and fitfully. But then we shall be seen and known of all men ; for the judgment will be a public judgment, and all will acknowledge its justice.

BP. TEMPLE.

It is "the day that is coming, and now is"—the presence of Christ.—B. JOWETT.

THE JEWS

What advantage then hath the Jew?

Rom. III. 1.

SINCE the Apostle has set aside the hearing, the teaching, and the name of the Jew, what reason was there for that nation being called? He says not, None, but he joins in the argument, and shows that the Jews were punished owing to their pre-eminence. They had the Law put into their hands because He held them worthy, so far as to entrust the oracles to them, which came down from above. Yet they made the honours bestowed on them a means of insulting Him that honoured them! If there was to be a trial and an examination of the things He had done for the Jews, and of what had been done on their part towards Him, the victory would be with God, and all the right on His side. He for His part had done everything, but they were nothing the better for it.—CHRYSTOSTOM.

The benefit and privilege of the Israelite consisted in this: unto them were committed the oracles of God, and those oracles were a perpetual witness of the better Dispensation. So that the hopes of the ancient believer may be said to have been always in a state of pilgrimage, travelling onward through the successive periods of revelation, and finding no rest, till they had crossed the barrier which divided the Law and the Gospel.

DAVISON.

The unfaithfulness of men, in neglecting to do their part as in not making a good use of the Scriptures, doth no way prejudice, but rather commend the fidelity of God, in allowing them these mercies, which they make so ill use of.—HAMMOND.

AN UNHOLY EXCUSE

*But if our unrighteousness
commendeth the righteousness
of God, what shall we say ?*

Rom. III. 5.

ALTHOUGH the unrighteousness and wickedness of men be overruled by God to subserve the purposes of His glory, yet is God just

in punishing all unrighteousness and wickedness whatsoever. God is never intentionally, but is sometimes accidentally glorified by the sin of man.—BURKITT.

It is only as a man might speak about man that the Apostle dares to utter such a thought. It is an impossible thought ; for if it held good there could not be any judgment. No sin would be punishable, for all sin would serve to emphasise the strict veracity of God in His denunciation of it, and therefore would ultimately conduce to His glory. It would thus cease to be sinful, and there would be nothing to hinder us from adopting the principle that is so calumniously attributed to us—that it is lawful to do evil that good may come. A calumny it is, and any such principle with all that appertains to it is justly condemned.

SANDAY.

Suggestions that reflect dishonour upon God, and His justice and holiness, are rather to be startled at than parleyed with.—HENRY.

The blindness and unrighteousness of sinners seem to be able to proceed so far, as that they would willingly plead their sins as merit before God, under pretence of the good which He brings out of them ; and even accuse Him of injustice and unrighteousness, for punishing them.—QUESNEL.

OUR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

They are all under sin : as it is written,

*There is none righteous,
no, not one ;*

There is none that understandeth,

There is none that seeketh after God . . .

Rom. III. 9-11.

ASSUREDLY, it is not by chance that the most evangelical of the Prophets and the most doctrinal of the Apostles both begin in the same way, by speaking of the sinfulness of man, of the weakness and sinfulness of our souls. They did it, because they knew it was as necessary

for them to begin thus, as for a builder, who would have his house stand, to lay a deep foundation. ,

A. W. HARE.

Let the holiest and best things, which we do, be considered. We are never better affected unto God than when we pray ; yet, when we pray, how are our affections many times distracted ! Are we not as unwilling many times to begin, and as glad to make an end, as if in saying " Call upon Me " He had set us a very burdensome task ?—HOOKER.

St. Paul reduceth sin into every part of us, both soul and body, as unto certain common places ; you may call it the Geography of wickedness. There is none that understandeth : thus our reason is ignorant—none that seeketh after God : our will is disobedient. What hope remains ? Our tongues have used deceit. Our feet are swift to shed blood. Our eyes not dim, but wanting before them the veil of reverence—there is no fear of God before our eyes. Aristotle said our soul was like a fair skin of parchment, whereon nothing was written. But Plato speaks of his soul, that it was scribbled all over with evil characters.—BP. HACKET.

OUR CONDEMNATION

Because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.

Rom. III. 20.

THIS is the solemn and important conclusion of all the foregoing argument. The Apostle does not here say either that justification by legal works would be impossible if the law could be wholly kept, or that those were not justified who observed the prescribed sacrifices and offerings of the ceremonial law, of which he has never once spoken, but wholly of the moral law. By that law then man cannot arrive at God's righteousness. The reason being, that the law has no such office, in the present state of human nature manifested both in history and Scripture, to render righteous Jew or Gentile : its office is altogether different, namely, to detect and bring to light the sinfulness of man.—ALFORD.

It is not without good reason that Paul, when he mentions "works," so often adds "of the law"; for it was on these that his opponents were relying : and were ignorant of those better works, which flow from results from faith and justification.—BENGEL.

In saying the law doth not justify we affirm not that the law is unprofitable. It hath its proper office and use, but not that which the adversaries do imagine, namely to make men righteous : it accuseth and condemneth. The law is good if a man do rightly use the law as the law, but if he translateth it to another use, and attribute that unto it which he should not, then he perverts not only the law but the whole Scripture.—LUTHER.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe . . .

Rom. III. 21-22.

THIS important passage is the citadel of the Christian faith.—OLSHAUSEN.

It is not easy to fix the sense of the word “righteousness.” Most commentators explain it as meaning a state of favourable acceptance with God ; the manner of becoming righteous which God

hath appointed. On the exact sense, however, commentators are by no means agreed. A free paraphrase of the text would read, Now, under the Gospel, a method of justification is revealed, of which God is the author, and to which all the Scriptures bear testimony, that method which, rejecting obedience as the ground of justification, makes faith in Christ and His merits the only cause, and which extends its benefits to all believers, without discrimination, Gentiles as well as Jews.

BLOOMFIELD.

The word translated “just” or “righteous” is seldom applied to the act of punitive justice ; it more often means the abating of the rigour of exact law, and the bringing in of moderation, equity, and mercy instead of it. Accordingly this phrase being used of God must be understood to denote His mercy and goodness and clemency in forgiving our sins. When the word is used in a sense implying a legal proceeding, it means that a man is acquitted by the rules of that law by which he is judged. In this case he is judged not by the law of Moses but by the law of Christ, which allows pardon

THE WAY OF SALVATION

and remission of sins for which the law of Moses allowed no mercy, admitted no sacrifice, no expiation, but inflicted death on the offender were he never so penitent. Proceeding according to this rule—the law of Christ, the Gospel covenant—God acquits the penitent believer.—HAMMOND.

According to St. Paul, God's righteousness is not merely condemnatory and putting to death, but in its perfect revelation it is delivering and quickening. Grace itself is called on the one side "righteousness," and on the other "love."—SCHAFF.

Righteousness by faith is called by St. Paul the righteousness of God. (1) Because God has enjoined faith as the righteousness which He will count to sinners, and has declared that He will accept and reward it as righteousness. (2) Because it stands in opposition to the righteousness of man, which consists in complete obedience to the law.—MACKNIGHT.

It is called the righteousness of God because of the concern which the Father, Son, and Spirit have in it. The Father sent His Son to work it out, and being wrought out, He approves and accepts it; the Son is the author of it by His obedience and death; the Spirit discovers it to sinners, works faith in them to lay hold upon it, and pronounces the sentence of justification by it in their consciences.—GILL.

He does not say "righteousness" simply, but the "righteousness of God," so that the great degree of the grace and the certainty of the promise may be displayed in the worthiness of the Person, for to Him all things are possible. And he does not say "is given," but "is manifested," so pruning away accusation of

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novelty, for that which is manifested is the old which had been concealed.—CHRYSOSTOM.

Here then we are led to advert to the controversies that have arisen in the Church concerning the words “justification,” and “to justify” as applied to man. It is affirmed by some that they intimate an *imputation* of the righteousness of Christ to us. Others assert that they also represent the *infusion* of His righteousness into us.

Perhaps the truth may be declared by saying that the word strictly rendered signifies to account righteous by imputation, and not to make righteous by infusion ; that the formal act, wherein justification, properly understood, consists, is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to us, and the declaration of our acquittal and restoration to God’s favour by virtue of the meritorious acts and sufferings of Christ ; yet that in this statement there is no denial, but rather a declaration, that we are also made righteous by our union with Christ, and that God’s righteousness is not only imputed, but also is imparted to us in Him who is “the Lord our Righteousness.”—BP. WORDSWORTH.

Justification and sanctification may be distinguished by the student, as are the arterial and nervous systems in the human body ; but in the living soul they are coincident and inseparable.—LIDDON.

Justification is primarily a question of relationship, not of character or conduct ; though the relationship is conceived as conditioning both character and conduct. It puts on a right footing one whose relation has been what it should not be.—D. W. SIMON.

Compare Dr. Moffatt’s note on “righteousness,” pp. 132-3.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

THE PROPITIATION

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom God set forth to be ■ propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to shew his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God . . .

Rom. III. 24-25.

THIS passage contains the very head and front of Paul's discussion.

MELANCHTHON.

This is the chief point and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible.—LUTHER.

I flung myself into a chair near the window, and seeing ■

Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the third chapter of Romans. Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made for my pardon and complete justification. In ■ moment I believed, and received the peace of the Gospel. Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy.—COWPER.

In the Epistles of St. Paul the word "justify" is used in the sense of remission of sins through faith in Christ Jesus ; and does not mean making the person just or righteous, but treating him as if he were so, having already forgiven him his sins.—A. CLARKE.

The Scripture says that Christ offered Himself to God as ■ propitiatory offering, but not that God offered and exhibited Him to mankind as a sacrifice.—PHILIPPI.

The word translated "redemption" has two senses in the New Testament. (1) It means properly "a deliverance effected by the payment of a ransom."

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This is its primary etymological meaning. (2) It means deliverance simply, without any reference to the means of its accomplishment, whether by power or wisdom. When applied to the work of Christ, as effecting our deliverance from the punishment of sin, it is always taken in its proper sense, deliverance effected by the payment of a ransom. This is evident from the fact that Christ is uniformly presented as a Redeemer, not in the character of a teacher, but of a priest, a sacrifice, propitiation.—HODGE.

The ransom of mankind from the triple bondage of the law, of sin, and of punishment.—FARRAR.

Precisely in what sense the punishment of our sins fell upon Christ, and in what sense the justice of God was vindicated by its so falling, is a point which we are not able to determine. Nothing, we may be sure, can be involved which is in ultimate conflict with morality. At the same time, we see that under the ordinary government of God, the innocent suffer for the guilty, and there may be some sort of transference of this analogy into the transcendental sphere. In any case, Christ was innocent, and Christ suffered. On any theory there is a connection between His death and human sin. What connection, is a question to which, perhaps, only a partial answer can be given.

The Greek word rendered "propitiation" properly means "that which renders propitious." Here, "that which renders God propitious." In some way, which is not explained at all in this passage, and imperfectly explained elsewhere, the death of Christ did act so as to render God "propitious" towards men. He became more ready to pardon as they became more anxious to be pardoned.—SANDAY.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

JUSTIFICATION

*That he might himself be just,
and the justifier of him that
hath faith in Jesus.*

Rom. III. 26.

THIS righteousness which God accepts upon the account of Christ's sacrifice is not grounded upon a connivance or taking no notice of past sins, but the remission of them. For God accounts those just, not whose sins He overlooks or connives at, but those whose sins He has already pardoned, and upon their repentance takes into His favour, contrary to their deserts.—LE CLERC.

Almighty God, in the justification of the believing sinner, is not only gracious and merciful, but just and righteous in the most exalted degree ; justification is an act of justice as well as of mercy. O blessed be God, that pardon of sin is built upon that very attribute, the justice of God, which is so affrighting to the sinner. That which seemed to be the main bar against remission is now become the very ground and reason why God remits. Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect, when justice itself doth justify them ? Behold the sweet harmony of the Divine attributes in justifying and pardoning the believer ! One attribute is not robbed to pay another ; neither is one attribute raised upon the ruin of another ; but justice and mercy both triumph.—BURKITT.

God declares His righteousness in the propitiation itself. Never was there such a demonstration of the justice and holiness of God as in the death of Christ. And in the pardon upon that propitiation is His righteousness also declared ; that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. Mercy and truth are so met together, righteousness and peace have so kissed

each other, that it is now become not only an act of grace and mercy, but an act of righteousness, in God, to pardon the sins of believers.—HENRY.

The righteousness of God in the death of Christ has fully revealed that which the human view of the early and later times found so difficult to grasp ; namely, righteousness and forbearance or love in one spirit, condemnation and deliverance in one act, killing and giving new life in one operation.—LANGE.

The justice of God not merely appeared, but really exercised itself in the blood-shedding of Christ ; He Himself, in antithesis to the person to be justified. We have here the greatest paradox which the Gospel presents ; for, in the Law, God is seen as just and condemning ; in the Gospel, He is seen as being *just* Himself, and, at the same time, *justifying* the sinner, who is of faith.—BENGEL.

A sin-offering excites, on the one hand, the feeling of guilt, and is expiation ; on the other, it produces pardon and peace ; and thus Christ's death is not only ■ proof of God's grace, but also of His judicial righteousness.—De WETTE.

In the death of Christ, God punished sin and saved the sinner, and Divine justice was vindicated in the fullest display and triumph of redeeming love. Not that the Father poured the vials of His wrath upon His innocent and beloved Son, but the Son voluntarily and in infinite love assumed the whole curse of sin for the whole human family.—SCHAFF.

There was only one way of forgiveness, and that way by the shed blood of the woman's seed, God's incarnate Son.—T. ROBINSON.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

FAITH

*We reckon therefore that ■
man is justified by faith
apart from the works of the
law.*

Rom. III. 28.

FAITH is but one of those things which in several senses are said to justify us. It is truly said of God, that God only justifies us — nothing can effect it,

nothing can work towards it but only the mere goodness of God. It is truly said of Christ that Christ only justifies us—nothing enters into substance and body of the ransom of our sins but the obedience of Christ. It is also truly said that only faith justifies us,—nothing apprehends, nothing applies the merit of Christ to thee, but thy faith. And lastly, it is as truly said, only our works justify us,—only thy good life can assure thy conscience, and the world, that thou art justified. As the efficient justification, the gracious purpose of God, had done us no good without the material satisfaction, the death of Christ, that followed ; and as the material satisfaction, the death of Christ, would do me no good without the instrumental justification, the apprehension by faith ; so neither would this profit without the declaratory justification, by which all is pleaded and established. God enters not into our material justification ; that is only Christ's. Christ enters not into our instrumental justification ; that is only faith's. Faith enters not into our declaratory justification, for faith is secret and declaration belongs to works. Neither of these can be said to justify us alone, so as that we may take the chain to pieces, and think to be justified by any one link thereof—by God without Christ, by Christ without faith, by faith without works. And yet every one of these justifies us alone, so ■ that none of the

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rest enter into that way and that means by which any of these are said to justify us.—DONNE.

The Bible never says "faith justifies," but, "we are justified by faith," because faith comes into view simply as the means which apprehends and appropriates Christ.—SCHAFF.

Though it is by faith we are justified, and by faith only, yet not by such a faith as has no works springing out of it. Every such faith is a dead faith. And yet it is not from the works that spring out of faith, but from the faith which is the root of works, that we are justified.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

It may be necessary to explain why it is, that in some parts of St. Paul's Epistles a certain stress is laid upon faith, over and above the other parts of a religious character in our justification. The reason seems to be as follows : the Gospel being pre-eminently ■ Covenant of Grace, faith is of more excellence than other virtues, because it confesses this beyond all others. Works of obedience witness to God's just claims upon us, not to His mercy ; but faith comes empty-handed, hides even its own worth, and does but point at that precious scheme of Redemption which God's love has devised for sinners. Hence, it is the frame of mind especially suited to it, and it is said, in ■ special way, to justify us, because it glorifies God, witnessing that He accepts those only who confess they are not worthy to be accepted.—J. H. NEWMAN.

It is faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone ; just as it is the heat of the sun which warms the earth, and yet in the sun it is not alone, because it is always conjoined with light.—CALVIN.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

*Do ■ then make the law of
none effect through faith?
God forbid: nay, we estab-
lish the law.*

Rom. III. 31.

and secure its standing, by fixing it on the right basis. The law is still of use to convince us of what is past, and to direct us for the future; though we cannot be saved by it as ■ covenant, yet we own it, and submit to it as ■ rule in the hand of the Mediator, subordinate to the law of grace; and so far from overthrowing it, we establish the law.—HENRY.

The law may be considered as ■ *rule*, or as ■ *covenant*. Christ has freed all believers from the rigour and curse of the law as ■ covenant, but He has not freed them from the law, considered as ■ rule. The law, ■ a rule, can no more be abolished or changed than can the nature of good or evil.—BP. SANDERSON.

That was ■ good saying of Luther's, Walk in the heaven of the promise, but in the earth of the Law; that in respect of believing, this of obeying.—TRAPP.

The law prefigures, foretells, and promises grace: grace gives the substance, the effect, and the accomplishment of the law. To show men the spirit and completion of the law, this is "to establish the law." Jesus Christ alone causes it to be fulfilled, because He alone causes it to be loved.—QUESNEL.

Few texts, when rightly understood, are more important than this,—BP. MIDDLETON.

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ABRAHAM

Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

Rom. IV. 3.

WHAT St. Paul really meant, I conceive, was to ascribe our first admission to God's approbation and favour to the principle of faith abstracted from all its outward fruits ; that is, he intended to maintain that God accounts us righteous, so soon as He finds true and living faith in our hearts, without waiting for any of the results of actual conduct, to which faith leads ; or, more strictly, with which, if vital, it is pregnant : and, in my mind, no idea could have been more important, more beautiful, or more exquisitely philosophical. His object was to lead them effectually from wretched self-working mechanism to that vitalising spirit of goodness, that principle of new life and ■ heavenly nature, which the Gospel was formed to communicate, and of which the Eternal Word " made flesh " was the living source. He therefore sets himself to press the acquirement of the simple central principle. He not only directs them to look for it, to expect it, and to rely upon its efficacy, when obtained, without regard to their own previous character or conduct, whether good or evil ; but also, with ■ certain unconcern even about the duties and virtues, which were to follow ; not because these were in any respect of small value, but because they would be far more effectually attained by pursuing them, not immediately and in themselves, but in the principle, which would spontaneously produce them. To all which, as ■ crowning motive intelligible to all, he adds this great consideration : that, if the favour of God was the object pursued, it was the same vital principle, that could alone obtain it.—ALEXANDER KNOX.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

DAVID

David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works . . .

Rom. IV. 6.

DAVID is the second witness of grace, and of the free righteousness of faith, and lived in the time of the Law. It is the happiness and blessedness of man to find only in

God, and not in himself, strength and righteousness : because he thereby finds sufficient reason to be humble and not anything at all to exalt and puff him up. The first degree of blessedness is to be delivered from sin by ■ real pardon or forgiveness, and by a grace which renders us truly just or righteous.—QUESNEL.

Blessed are they, not who never sinned at all, who were never in ■ wicked or wrong course ; but who, having been sinners, have found place of repentance and mercy upon reformation, merely by the forgiveness and pardon of God.—HAMMOND.

The Apostle mentions David, probably as the other great person, to whom God promised a blessing to all nations through his seed.—WHITBY.

With this, David's authority, St. Paul proves that man's blessedness does not consist in not having sins, for that we all have iniquities and sins ; neither does it consist in his working to satisfy God for his iniquities and for his sins, for there are no works that can suffice to do that ; but it consists in God's pardoning man's iniquities, and in His covering man's sins, in His not imputing them to man, or in His not bringing them into account to punish them.—JUAN DE VALDÉS.

If covered, then not noticed ; if noticed, then not punished.—AUGUSTINE.

HEIRS OF THE PROMISE

For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith.

Rom. IV. 13.

are heirs of this promise. The inheritance of the world, then, is not the possession of Canaan merely either literally, or as a type of a better possession,—but that ultimate lordship over the whole world which Abraham, as the father of the faithful in all peoples, and Christ, the Seed of Promise, shall possess : the former figuratively indeed and only implicitly,—the latter personally and actually.—ALFORD.

Christ, though He took “the seed of the woman,” yet doth not benefit any but “the seed of Abraham,” even those that follow the steps of his faith. They only are Abraham’s seed that lay hold of “the word of promise.” But that is not all : there goeth more to the making of “Abraham’s seed,” as Christ Himself, the true “Seed,” teacheth both them and us. Saith He, “If ye be Abraham’s sons, then must ye do the works of Abraham” : which the Apostle well calleth the steps or impressions of Abraham’s faith ; and so they be Abraham’s seed, here at the first, and come to Abraham’s bosom, there at the last.—BP. ANDREWES.

Abraham is the father of all who come under the wings of the Divine majesty.—MAIMONIDES.

As the reward of his faith, Abraham inherited both this world and that which is to come.—TANCHUMA.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

JESUS OUR LORD

Who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.

Rom. IV. 24-25.

THIS verse is a little covenant in which the whole of Christianity is comprehended.—LUTHER.

The faith of Abraham was directed to that which was about to be, and which could

come to pass, ours to that which has actually taken place ; the faith of both is directed to Him who makes alive. Faith flows from the resurrection of Christ, and so also does justification.—BENGEL.

Christ died for the establishment of the New Covenant His Testament, and rose again to be His own executor of it.—WHICHCOTE.

Not that His death had no hand in our justifying, but because our justification, begun in His death, was perfected by His resurrection. Redemption we have by Christ's abasement, application of it by His advancement. This one verse is an abridgment of the whole Gospel, the sum of all the good news in the world.

TRAPP.

The death of Christ is the proper cause of justification, or means of atonement, according to St. Paul ; the resurrection of Christ is only the mediate or secondary cause of it. The atoning efficacy lay in His death, but the proof of that efficacy—the proof that it was really the Messiah who died—was to be seen in the Resurrection.—SANDAY.

The Scripture, when it speaketh of our salvation, standeth only upon the death of Christ, yet here now the Apostle goeth further ; for, because his purpose was to deliver the cause of salvation more clearly, he

reckoned two branches thereof. And first, he saith, our sins are done away by the death of Christ ; secondly, that righteousness is purchased by His resurrection. The meaning is, when we hold the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection, nothing is missing to us in perfect righteousness.—CALVIN.

By His Death we know that Christ has suffered for sin ; by His Resurrection we are assured that the sins for which He suffered were not His own. If no man had been a sinner, He had not died ; if He had been a sinner, He had not risen again.—BP. PEARSON.

Now, though the death of Christ was the reconciling of the world to God, yet the Resurrection of Christ is the great and solid foundation of our hope and faith in Him ; even of our faith in His Blood, by which He made the propitiation for our sins. And, although Christ died for our offences and by His precious Blood made atonement for our sins, yet, since our faith in His death, our hope in His Blood, by which hope and faith we are justified, are built upon the truth and credit of His Resurrection, it is very properly said that He rose again for our justification. For the death of Christ would have been no justification to us, nor could we have had hope or faith in it, but for the power and glory of the Resurrection, which has wiped away the scandal and ignominy of the Cross, and made it a rational act of faith to hope for life and immortality from Him, who Himself once died upon the tree.

BP. SHERLOCK.

Our justification and absolution are rather ascribed to the Resurrection of Christ than to His Death ; for that indeed His Death was a ground of bestowing them, but His Resurrection did accomplish the collation of them.—BARROW.

THE FRUITS OF FAITH

PEACE

Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . .

Rom. V. 1.

WE should not speak of the peace of God as of ■ mere sensation ; in the feeling of peace, the most glorious actual relation is reflected. We are not only in harmony, but in covenant union with God ; not only in harmony with ourselves, but true to ourselves ; not only in harmony with God's presence and government in the world, and in all events, but also in connection with and under the protection of heaven.—LANGE.

By faith we lay hold of God's arm, and of His strength, and are at peace. There is more in this peace than barely ■ cessation of enmity : there is friendship and lovingkindness. Abraham being justified by faith was called " the friend of God," which was his honour, but not his peculiar honour : Christ has called His disciples friends. And sure a man needs no more to make him happy than to have God his friend !—HENRY.

I give not the whole definition of peace with God, unless, to God reconciled to man, I add, man reconciled to God. To know whether God be at peace with you : see if you be at peace with God. This is the note in the index ; and, if we find it, then we may be sure to find the other in the book. As he that looked westward for the rising of the sun saw it sooner gilding the tops of the mountains than they that looked for it in the east ; so this is the best way to see whether God be at peace with us : let us look back upon ourselves, and see how our condition is towards God.

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Some hold that the answer by Urim and Thummim was by the rising of the stones in the High Priest's breast-plate. Though I am not of their mind, yet I may allude unto it in the case in hand : look into thine own breast : make thine observation thence : see how thy heart stands affected towards God ; and by that thou mayest understand what God's answer to thy question is—whether He be at peace with thee.

DR. LIGHTFOOT.

“ Peace with God ” is not quite identical with “ the peace of God.” The former is the peace that puts an end to war and enmity, the new relation with God, into which the justified believer is admitted : he is no longer an enemy lying under wrath, but a son reconciled, restored and beloved. Upon this new relation between God and man is founded the work of the Holy Spirit in man, which results finally in the perfect harmony of the inner life, the deep tranquillity of a soul that has found its true happiness and rest, in a word “ the peace of God.”—GIFFORD.

A decided weight of authority compels us to read here, “ Let us have,” though the older rendering would seem to make the best sense. “ Let us have ” would mean, “ Let us enter into and possess,” the state of reconciliation with God, with all that blissful sense of composure and harmony which flows from such a condition. “ Peace ” is the special legacy bequeathed by Jesus to His disciples.—SANDAY.

Peace which is the fruit of faith is an incredible and most constant joy of mind, our conscience being quiet, and established in God's grace.—BISHOP'S BIBLE.

Peace is liberty in tranquillity.—CICERO.

THE FRUITS OF FAITH

GRACE

*Through whom also we have
had our access by faith into
this grace wherein we stand...*

Rom. V. 2.

THE figurative language here used is peculiarly expressive and appropriate. As those only who were in the favour of ancient monarchs could freely approach them, and even such had generally to be led forward by an "introducer"; so Christ secures access for us into the favour and presence of God. We come not of ourselves, but, abashed and humbled, are led along by our Mediator.—HODGE.

The phrase "wherein we stand" means, not stirring a foot, for any temptation or persecution, a metaphor taken from soldiers keeping their station in the battle.

TRAPP.

By this word "standeth" he signifieth that faith is not a wavering persuasion, or that continueth for one day, but steady and deeply settled in the minds of men, that it might preserve the whole life.—CALVIN.

He had well said, "wherein we stand," for this is the nature of God's grace. A person who in human things has acquired rule and glory and authority, does not stand therein continuously, but is speedily cast out of it. If man take it not from him, death comes and is sure to take it away. But God's gifts are not of this kind; for neither man, nor occasion, nor crises of affairs, nor even the devil, nor death, can come and cast us out of them. But when we are dead, we then, more strictly speaking, have possession of them.

CHRYSOSTOM.

It denotes not only admission to, but confirmation in, the favour of God.—HENRY.

HOPE

Let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Rom. V. 2.

THIS means not, as Origen holds, the hope of *beholding* this glory, which would need to have been expressed more definitely ; still less is Chrysostom's view right, that it is the hope that God will glorify Himself in us. Neither are Luther, Grotius, and others correct in calling it the glory to be *bestowed* by God ; but it is the hope of *participating* in the glory possessed by God (1 Thess. ii. 12).—THOLUCK.

That which is His, His people shall share.—BENGEL.

Observe the happy union and connection between grace and glory : grace is glory begun, and glory is grace consummated ; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace in the fruits ; grace is the lowest degree of glory, and glory the highest degree of grace. A justified person hopes for the glory of God, and well he may, for it is purchased for him ; it is promised to him ; he has it already in the first-fruits of grace : it is prepared for him, and he is preparing for it.

BURKITT.

The word rendered “ rejoice ” properly denotes that swell of emotion which leads to loud speaking, either in the way of bragging without any warrantable ground or of legitimate exultation and triumph. This last is the meaning here intended. The assured prospect of our future glory begets ■■ triumphant a spirit ■■ if it were ■ present possession.—DAVID BROWN.

We triumph in the hope of sharing God's glory by being with Christ in His Kingdom.—ALFORD.

THE FRUITS OF FAITH

TRIBULATION

*Let ■ also rejoice in ■■
tribulations . . .*

Rom. V. 3.

TRIBULATIONS throughout this life seem to deliver us up to death, not to glory, and yet not only are they not unfavourable to hope, but they aid it.—BENGEL.

In prosperity we know not whether we love God for His own sake, or for the sake of the temporal blessings which He gives us. Affliction is our touchstone, which proves us, and shows to ourselves and to others whether we are good coin or not. It also smelts away, ■ by fire, our dross, and purifies us. Such proof worketh in us hope.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

We have here the genealogy of hope. Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.—CARYL.

Observe how one grace generates and begets another; graces have ■ generation one from another, though they have all but one generation from the Spirit of Christ.

BURKITT.

Many rooms man passeth before he comes to this which indeed joins upon heaven itself. Faith is the key which lets him into all. First it opens the door of Justification and lets him into ■ state of peace and reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ: through this he passeth on to another, the Presence-chamber of God's favour. This opens into ■ third, where he not only enjoys the grace and favour of God, but where ■ hope is firmly planted in his heart for heaven's glory. And now he is brought to the most inward room of all, which none can come at but he that goes through all the former, where we glory in tribulation.—GURNALL.

THE LOVE OF GOD

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for ■

Rom. V. 7-8.

SCARCELY will a person be persuaded to die for ■ man who is upright in the abstract, though perhaps some may be found who may bring himself to die for the man who is specially and singularly good to him. For instance, Orestes died for Pylades, and Alcestis for

Admetus, her husband : and some have died for others because they were their cherished friends, or benefactors, specially dear and kind to the persons so sacrificing themselves. Hence appears the strength of the Apostle's argument : (1) Some with difficulty may be found ready to die for one who is strictly just. We were not that, but we were guilty before God. (2) A person peradventure may be found willing to die for the man who is amiable for his goodness, and is the special object of his affections, and endeared to him by special acts of tenderness and benevolence. But we could not be said to be in that relation to God and Christ ; we were enemies and rebels against them by our wicked works.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

Divine love dies for its enemies.—OLSHAUSEN.

The fates permit that Admetus should escape impending death if he can furnish in his place another for the powers below ; but he found no one save his wife who was willing to die for him, and she is now within the house breathing her last.—EURIPIDES.

THE FRUITS OF FAITH

THE LIVING SAVIOUR

If, while ■ were enemies, ■ were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life . . .

Rom. V. 10.

WHICH means that something more than merely reconciliation follows upon our deliverance.—BENGEL.

Some have thought that the point of comparison here is power. But throughout the passage from verse 5 St. Paul speaks not of God's power, but of His love, as the foundation of our hope. It was ■ greater trial of love to reconcile us by Christ's death than to save us in His life: it cost more to redeem us at first than it will now cost to save us unto the end.—GIFFORD.

Here, then, are two truths which, in assuring us of pardon, assure us of everything. "Jesus died, and Jesus lives"—these are the truths which contain everything for us. "Jesus died!"—that contains everything that we need for reconciliation and peace: "Jesus lives!"—that contains everything pertaining to the promised inheritance. All that can come forth from His grave, or down from His throne—all that a dying and a living Saviour can do, is ours.—BONAR.

I cannot have better security for the present or the future than God's former mercies exhibited to me. Who does not triumph with joy, when he considers what God hath done? Who can doubt of the performance of all, that sees the greater part performed? He, that succoured us, when there was nothing in us but His "enemies," will much more send new supplies, when the town is held for Him and by His friends.—DONNE.

ADAM AND CHRIST

*As through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the **one** shall the many be made righteous.*

Rom. V. 19.

THE same law of intimate union between the members of the race and their head, which made one man's sin so diffusive of death, has made one man's obedience or righteousness so diffusive of life. Christ shall diffuse himself no less effectually than Adam, as the one by generation, **and** the other by regeneration. Nay, there shall be, as there ever must be, a mightier power in the good than in the evil; for while the one sin was sufficient to ruin the world, the righteousness of one did not merely do away with that one sin, but with all the innumerable others which had unfolded themselves from it.—TRENCH.

The Jewish Rabbis would have spoken of the first and second Adam; but which of them would have made the application of the figure to all mankind? Which of them would have breathed the quickening Spirit into the dry bones? The figure of the Apostle bears the impress of his own age and country; the interpretation of the figure is for every age, and for the whole world. A figure of speech it remains still, an allegory after the manner of that age and country, but yet with no uncertain or ambiguous signification. It means that "God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth"; and that "He hath concluded all under sin, that He may have mercy upon all." It means a truth deep yet simple—the fact which we recognise in ourselves and trace everywhere around us—that we are one in a common evil nature, which, if it be not derived from the sin of Adam, exists as really as if it were.

THE FRUITS OF FAITH

It means that we shall be made one in Christ, by the grace of God, in ■ measure here, more fully and perfectly in another world. It means that Christ is the natural head of the human race, the author of its spiritual life. It shows Him to us as He enters within the veil, in form as a man, the "first-fruits of them which sleep." It is a sign or intimation which guides our thoughts in another direction also, beyond the world of which religion speaks, to observe what science tells us of the interdependence of soul and body—what history tells of the chain of lives and events. It leads us to reflect on ourselves not as isolated, independent beings;—not such as we appear to be to our own narrow consciousness, but as we truly are—the creatures of antecedents which we can never know, fashioned by circumstances over which we have no control. The infant, coming into existence in ■ wonderful manner, inherits something, not from its parents only, but from the first beginning of the human race.—B. JOWETT.

This universality of sin and universality of justification leads Paul to one of his great sketches of the religious history of humanity. To him that history was summed up in three great moments with the lives of Adam, Moses, and Christ, of which the mission of Moses was the least important. Those three names corresponded to three stages in the world's religious history—Promise, Law, and Faith—of which the third is the realisation of the first. Adam was a type of Christ, and each stood as it were at the head of long lines of representatives. Each represents the principle of a whole æon. Let us imitate St. Paul in dwelling rather on the positive than the negative side, rather on Christ than Adam, rather on the superabundance of grace than the origin of sin.—FARRAR.

THE LAW

*And the law came in beside,
that the trespass might
abound ; but where sin
abounded, grace did abound
more exceedingly . . .*

Rom. V. 20.

THE Law came in, not in order that man might be more sinful, heaven forbid ! but in order that sin might more clearly be shown to be transgression. It proved the superabundance of the inundation, ■ graduated posts in a river mark the rising of the flood.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

St. Paul regards the Law ■ ■ ■ salutary medicine, which forces the disease that rages in the inward, nobler parts to the surface.—OLSHAUSEN.

In this, God acted, not with cruelty but for the purpose of healing. For sometimes a man thinks himself whole, and is sick ; and inasmuch as he is sick, and perceives it not, he seeks not a physician : the disease is increased, the inconvenience grows, the physician is sought, and all is healed.—AUGUSTINE.

This teacheth that the greatness of grace was by so much the more apparent, as that when sin abounded it did pour out itself so abundantly that it did not only overmatch the deluge of sin, but did also swallow it up.

CALVIN.

He does not say “ did abound,” but “ did much more abound.” For it was not remission from punishment only that He gave us, but from sins, and life also. As if not merely to free a man from his disease, but to give him also beauty, and strength, and rank ; or again, not to give one who is an hungered nourishment only, but to put him in possession of great riches, and to set him in the highest authority.—CHRYSTOSTOM.

THE INWARD CONFLICT

SIN AND GRACE

*Shall we continue in sin, that
grace may abound ?*

Rom. VI. 1.

THERE is not a more tried shaft in all the devil's quiver than this : a persuasion to men to bear themselves too bold upon the favour of God.—BP. HALL.

The rich contents of this chapter may be summed up in this single proposition : the believing Christian cannot possibly be a minister of sin. The true Christian cannot live in sin, because the love of sin is destroyed in his heart since he really entered into fellowship with Him who died through sin and for it, that we might live through Him. We may go yet a step further, and maintain that the true Christian will not serve sin, just because he feels himself free and happy under the dominion of grace. Experience testifies that the stumbling of true believers is really something different from the iniquity of the wholly unregenerate.

VAN OOSTERZEE.

To argue from mercy to liberty is the devil's logic. Should we not after deliverance yield obedience ? A man may truly say the sea burns or fire cools as that salvation breeds looseness.—TRAPP.

What can be more disagreeing than ■ crucified Christ and a carnal Christian ? A liberal Saviour and a covetous disciple ? A Saviour that suffered all things and a world that will suffer nothing ?—BP. PATRICK.

It is not the entire impossibility, but rather the shamefulness of it, which is thus expressed. For shameful, sure it is, after we have been washed, to roll again in the mire.—GROTIUS.

UNION WITH CHRIST

Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Rom. VI. 3.

IN previous chapters St. Paul had dealt with one of the two great root-ideas, justification by faith; he now passes to the second, union with Christ. The one might be described as the juridical, the other ■ the mystical, theory of salvation. The connecting-link which unites them is faith. Faith in Christ, and especially in the death of Christ, is the instrument of justification. Carried a degree further, it involves an actual identification with the Redeemer Himself. This, no doubt, is mystical language. When strictly compared with the facts of the religious consciousness, it must be admitted that all such terms as union, oneness, fellowship, identification, pass into the domain of metaphor. They are taken to express the highest conceivable degree of attachment and devotion. This attachment had a special relation to His death. It involved ■ communion or fellowship with His death. This fellowship is ethical, i.e. it implies a moral conduct corresponding to that relation to Christ which it assumes.

Why has baptism this special connection with the death of Christ? In the first place, the death of Christ is the central and cardinal fact of the Christian scheme. It is specially related to justification, and justification proceeds from faith, which is ratified in baptism. In the second place, the symbolism of baptism was such as naturally to harmonise with the symbolism of death. It was the final close of one period, and the beginning of another—the complete stripping off of the past and putting on of the “new man.”—SANDAY.

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Christ calleth His death a Baptism : so Augustine calls our Baptism a death. Baptism, says he, is our cross, and our passion, and our burial ; that is, in that we are conformed to Christ, as He suffered, died, and was buried. Because, if we be so baptised into His Name and into His death, we are thereby dead to sin, and have died the death of the righteous.—DONNE.

St. Paul regards this change—from sin to righteousness, from bondage to freedom, from death to life—as summed up in one definite act of the past ; potentially to all men in our Lord's Passion and Resurrection, actually to each individual man when he accepts Christ, is baptised into Christ. Then he dies once for all to sin, he lives henceforth for ever to God. This is his ideal. Practically, we know that the death to sin and the life to righteousness are imperfect, gradual, meagrely realised even by the most saintly men in this life ; but St. Paul sets the matter in this ideal light to force upon the consciences of his hearers the fact that an entire change came over them when they became Christians.

BP. LIGHTFOOT.

It is a state in which we are dead to the temptations of the world, dead to all those things which penetrate through the avenues of sense, dead to the terrors of the law, withdrawn from our own nature itself, shrunk and contracted, as it were, within a narrow space hidden with Christ and God. It is life and death at once—death in relation to earth, and life in relation to God.

B. JOWETT.

What does “ being baptised into His death ” mean ? That it is with a view to our dying as He did. For Baptism is the Cross. What the Cross then, and burial, is to Christ, that Baptism hath been to us, even if not in the same respects.—CHRYSOSTOM.

UNDER GRACE

For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under law, but under grace.

Rom. VI. 14.

HERE seemeth unto me to be ■ consolation, wherewith the faithful are confirmed, that they faint not in the study of holiness through the feeling of their weakness.

The Apostle does exhort them that they should apply all their powers unto the obedience of righteousness. But so long as they carry about the relics of the flesh, they must needs halt somewhat. Therefore, lest they, being overcome with the knowledge of their infirmity, should despair, he preventeth this in time, comforting them in this, that their works are not to be examined according to the severe rule of the law ; but, their impurity being remitted, God doth favourably and mercifully accept them. The yoke of the law cannot be borne, for it breaketh and crusheth those that bear it ; it remaineth, therefore, that the faithful flee unto Christ, and desire Him to be their deliverer ; for to this end took He upon Him the servitude of the law, whereunto otherwise He was not a debtor, that He might deliver those who were under the law. Therefore “ not to be under the law ” signifieth that we are not subject unto the law, as it requireth perfect righteousness, pronouncing death against all those who transgress it in any part. Under the name of “ grace,” we understand likewise both parts of redemption—that is, the remission of sins, whereby God imputeth righteousness unto us, and the sanctification of the Spirit, by the which He frameth us anew unto good works.—CALVIN.

We are not “ under grace ” but only when grace has dominion over us.—QUESNEL

THE TWO SERVICES

Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness ?

Rom. VI. 16.

THE truth and efficacy of the Christian religion lies in its having root in the heart. Wicked men cannot be wicked with their whole heart, but unconsciously and continually repent of their past conduct, and of their slavery to sin ; good men are good from the heart, and without constraint. Those who are the servants of righteousness, make progress, i.e. advance from righteousness to holiness, whereby they partake of the Divine nature ; workers of iniquity are workers of iniquity, nothing more.—BENGEL.

Had he said, " God be thanked that ye were servants of righteousness," it had been very proper ; but to hear him say, " God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin," may make us amazed. But, to clear the Apostle's sense, consider two things. (1) We have some men saying in Latin authors, We were of the city of Troy but cannot say, Now we are. So in this case, that it may be said, " Ye were, but ye are not now." (2) Since there is mention of servants, take a parallel, an Israelite saying " God be thanked that ye were bondmen in Egypt." His meaning is especially to thank God for their delivery. Ye had never been so careful to be servants of righteousness, but that ye have known what slavery it is to be servants of sin.

DR. LIGHTFOOT.

Formerly the body was only a servant ; now it is waited on as an imperious lord.—SENECA.

THE CONFLICT

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death ? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom. VII. 22-24.

IN this most important and difficult passage it is of the first consequence to have a clear view of the form of illustration which the Apostle adopts, and of the reason why he adopts it. The former has been amply treated by almost all commentators : the latter too generally has escaped their inquiry. But it furnishes, if satisfactorily treated, a key to the other. I ask then 'first, why St. Paul suddenly changes

here to the first person ? And the answer is, because he is about to draw a conclusion negating the question upon purely subjective grounds, proceeding on that which passes within, when the work of the law is carried on in the heart. And he is about to depict this work of the law by an example which shall set it forth in vivid colours, in detail, in its connection with sin in a man. What example then so apposite, as his own ? Introspective as his character was, and purified by his inner vision was by the Holy Spirit of God, what example would so forcibly bring out the inward struggles of the man which prove the holiness of the law, while they show its inseparable connection with the production of sin ? If this be the reason why the first person is here assumed (and I can find no other which does not introduce into St. Paul's style an arbitrariness and caprice which it least of all others exhibits), then we must dismiss from our minds all exegesis which

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explains the passage of any other, in the first instance, than of Paul himself : himself indeed, as an exemplar, wherein others may see themselves ; but not himself in the person of others, be they the Jews, nationally or individually, or all mankind, or individual men. Hence the complex self of Paul, compounded of the regenerate spiritual man, sympathising with God's law, serving God's law, in conflict with the still remaining though decadent carnal man, whose essence it is to serve the law of sin, to bring captive to the law of sin. This state of conflict and division against one's self would infallibly bring about utter ruin, and might well lead to despair, but for the rescue which God's grace has provided by Jesus Christ our Lord. The thanksgiving more than all convinces me, that Paul speaks of none other than himself, and carries out as far as possible the misery of the conflict with sin in his members, on purpose to bring in the glorious deliverance which follows.—ALFORD.

I see, says the Apostle, ■ from ■ watch-tower, which is called the mind, and is itself the repository of conscience, another law and one alien to the law of the mind, in the members. The soul is, ■ it were, the king ; the members are as the citizens ; sin is, ■ an enemy, admitted through the fault of the king, who is doomed to be punished by the oppression of the citizens.—BENGEL.

In the words " warring against the law of my mind," there is an allusion to the case of ■ city besieged, at last taken by storm, and the inhabitants carried away into captivity. It is not an advantage gained by sin, of which the Apostle speaks, but of ■ complete and final victory gained by corruption, which, having stormed and reduced the city, has carried away the

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inhabitants, with irresistible force, into captivity. Sin and corruption have a final triumph, conscience and reason are taken prisoners, laid in fetters and sold for slaves. And to render the state more miserable, the captive is chained to a dead body ; for there seems to be here an allusion to an ancient custom of certain tyrants who bound a dead body to a living prisoner, and obliged him to carry it about till the contagion took away his life.—A. CLARKE.

There is an emancipation, an enfranchisement from the tyranny of the thralldom of sin. But St. Paul's thanksgiving was not for such release ; he had not received a deliverance from the power and oppression of temptation. But he had an intimation from the Spirit of God that God would be as watchful over him with His grace as the devil could be with his temptations. And, if thou come to no further deliverance than this in this life—that is, to be delivered, though not from temptation by His power, yet in temptations by His grace, or by His mercy, after temptations have prevailed upon thee—attend God's leisure for thy further deliverance.—DONNE.

The Christian grace is ■ grace of combat. We deceive ourselves if we pretend to become holy without doing violence to ourselves. Our goodwill, how strong soever it be, and at length victorious, does notwithstanding receive some terrible shocks from the carnal will. Whoever has in this case any presumption of his own strength is very blind, or very much hardened. Fortify and strengthen me, O my God, against myself ; for I have no enemy more dangerous in the whole world.—QUESNEL.

Mark, I beseech you, it was the body of sin, not the life of sin ; a body of death, not the life of that body :

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or, if this body had yet some life, it was such a life ■ is left in the limbs when the head is struck off ; some dying quiverings, rather as the remainders of a life that was, than any act of a life that is ; or, if a further life, such ■ one as in swoons and fits of epilepsy, which yields breath, but not sense ; or, if some kind of sense, yet no motion ; or, if it have some kind of motion in us, yet no manner of dominion over us. What power, motion, sense, relics of life, are in ■ fully crucified man ? Such ■ one may waft up and down with the wind, but cannot move out of any internal principle. St. Paul swears that he “ dies daily ” ; yet he lives : so the best man sins hourly, even while he obeys ; but the powerful and overruling sway of sin is incompatible with the truth of regeneration.—BP. HALL.

These are the words of St. Paul ; but how are they made an apology for sin ! For he, that knoweth little of St. Paul, does easily remember this, though he understand it not. And we may observe it familiar in their mouths, who say they would be righteous, when they will be wicked ; who pretend they desire one thing, when they resolve the contrary. But we may say of these words, as Job did of his friends, “ They are but miserable comforters.” For to will here is no more than to approve, nor can it be. And the reason is plain. For he that doth *truly* will, cannot but do those things which show ■ willing mind. He that “ will be rich ” doth not gather wealth by saying he will be rich, but doth “ rise up early, and lie down late, and eat the bread of carefulness.” He that will marry a wife is not made a husband by that intention, by saying he will be married. “ If thou dost will indeed,” saith Chrysostom, “ thou canst not but do those things which manifest and demonstrate that

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will." We cannot say that he ever would be righteous, who is not. Never did any yet set forth with a willing mind whom God brought not to their journey's end.

FARINDON.

Every Christian is compelled to confirm what the Apostle here says, from his own personal experience. And well for him if he can also confirm the fact that God's law, and therefore God's will, is his delight—that he desires the good and hates the evil ; and indeed in such a way that the sin to which, against his will, he is hurried away, is foreign to his inmost nature. But woe to him, if, from his own personal experience, he could confirm only this, and not also the fact that the spirit of the new life from Christ Jesus has freed him from the urgency of sin, so that his will is now actually capable of good, and opposed to the death still working in him, as a predominating, overmastering power of life to be finally triumphant in glory.

DELITZSCH.

The angel has us by the hand, and the serpent by the heart.—ANON.

His warfare is within : there unfatigued
His fervent spirit labours ; there he fights,
And there obtains fresh laurels o'er himself,
And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.

COWPER.

As long as we have the body, and our soul is intermixed with such an evil, we shall never satisfactorily possess ourselves even of what we desire.—PLATO.

What is good we understand and know, but practise not.—EURIPIDES.

THE CONQUEST

*There is therefore now ■
condemnation to them that
are in Christ Jesus. For the
law of the Spirit of life in
Christ Jesus made me free
from the law of sin and of
death.*

Rom. VIII. 1-2.

THE eighth chapter may be described as not only the climax of a particular argument, but also as the climax—the broad extended summit, ■ it were—of the Epistle. It differs from the first section of chapter five in this, that while both describe the condition of the regenerate Christian, and both cover the whole range of time from the first admission to the Christian communion down to the ultimate and assured enjoyment of Christian immortality, the fifth chapter lays stress chiefly on the initial and final moments of this period, whereas this chapter emphasises rather the whole intermediate process. In technical language the one turns chiefly upon justification, the other upon sanctification. The connecting-link between the two is the doctrine of hope. The sense of justification wrought for us by Christ gives rise to hope ; the sense of sonship and communion with Christ, carrying with it the assurance of final redemption, also gives rise to hope. It may be said that faith is also a connecting-link ; because faith in the death of Christ is the same apprehensive faculty which later brings home the sense of communion with Christ to the believer. This chapter carries us into the inmost circle and heart of Christianity ; it treats of that peculiar state of beatitude, of refined and chastened joy for which no form of secularism is able to provide even the remotest equivalent.

The condemnation which in the present and final

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judgment of God impends over the sinner is removed by the intervention of Christ, and by the union of the believer with Him. By that union the power and empire of sin are thrown off and destroyed. There is ■ certain play on the word “condemn.” By “condemning” the law of sin, Christ removed “condemnation” from the sinner. He removed it objectively, or in the nature of things, and this removal is completed subjectively in the individual through that bond of mystical and moral attachment which makes what Christ has done his own act and deed.

The phrase “the law of the Spirit of life” defines more fully the mode in which the union with Christ becomes operative in the believer. It begins by imparting to him the Spirit of Christ; this Spirit creates within him a law; and the result of that law is life—that perfect spiritual vitality which includes within itself the pledge of immortality.—SANDAY.

The law of sin in ■ regenerate man is held in continual check by the law of the spirit of life; yet it is in his members still, not indeed working, for a mightier law has stepped in and now holds it in abeyance, but still there, and ready to work, did that higher law cease from its more effectual operation.—TRENCH.

The gracious, vivifying, enabling Law set me free from the rigorous, literal, and condemnatory Law.

BP. WORDSWORTH.

It is to be observed that the same person who spoke before is here represented as continuing the discourse, and speaks of himself as delivered from the bondage so bitterly complained of.—DODDRIDGE.

THE INWARD CONFLICT

THE DEFEAT OF SIN

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

Rom. VIII. 3-4.

of sinful flesh (for justice required the likeness), that is, in the flesh of His own Son, condemned that sin which was in our flesh that we might be made free. What the Law was powerless to do, God had power to do, and deprived the Law and sin of their power. Sin is condemned, and the execution of the sentence follows the condemnation: he who has been a sinner, now acts rightly, and the Law does not prosecute its claims against him.—BENGEL.

His own Son, and therefore like Himself, holy and sinless. "In the likeness of the flesh of sin" means, the flesh whose attribute and character was sin. He had a nature like sinful human nature, but had not Himself a sinful nature. The likeness did not consist in this, that He took our sins literally on Himself, and became Himself sinful, which would not amount to likeness of nature—but in this, that He was able to be tempted, that is, subjected to sensuous excitements, which in other men break out into sin, but in Him did not.—ALFORD.

Rom.—G

WHY is it that mention generally is made of the body, rather than of the soul of Christ? Because the theatre and workshop of sin is our flesh; and for this, it is the holy flesh of the Son of God, which is the remedy, and so is alive, which the Law no longer is to the believer. It was impossible for the Law to condemn sin and save the sinner, but God, in the likeness

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It is no reflection on the penmanship of a beautiful writer that he can give no adequate specimen of his art on the coarse or absorbent paper which will take on no fair impression of the character that he traces upon its surface. Nor is it any reflection on the power of an accomplished artist that he can raise no monument thereof from the stone that crumbles at every touch, and so is incapable of being moulded into the exquisite form of his own faultless and finished idea. And so of the Law, when it attempts to realise a portrait of moral excellence on the groundwork of our nature. It is because of the groundwork, and not of the Law, that the attempt has failed ; and so when Paul tells us of what the Law could not do, lest we should be left to imagine that this was from any want of force or capacity in the Law, he adds, " In that it was weak through the flesh."—CHALMERS.

The Law, though it work in us some outward conformity to God's commandments, and so hath a good effect upon the world, yet we are all this while but like dead instruments of music, that sound sweetly and harmoniously when they are only struck and played upon from without by the musician's hand, who hath the theory and law of music living within himself ; but the second, the living law of the Gospel, " the law of the Spirit of life " within us, is as if the soul of music should incorporate itself with the instrument, and live in the strings, and make them of their own accord, without any touch or impulse from without, dance up and down, and warble out their harmonies.—CUDWORTH.

Christ is in us by our flesh ; and we in Him by His Spirit.—BP. ANDREWES.

THE INHERITANCE

The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God : and if children, then heirs : heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ . . .

Rom. VIII. 16-17.

works of love, to witness before the world, and such-like more. Upon this testimony of the Holy Spirit, all the Christian's conviction of Christ and His work finally rests. This passage is, besides, important as one of the most striking in which the human spirit is represented as not in and by itself identical with the Divine.—OLSHAUSEN.

The test of the inward conviction is the outward life.—MACLAREN.

This testimony with our spirits is the sanctification of them, the subjecting of our wills and affections to His influences, acting upon us by the mediation of our own thoughts, yet discoverable to be from Him, by their opposition to our natural corruption.—DR. RIDLEY.

The dignity of the inheritance is shown by its being God's possession, and by its being the possession of the Firstborn of God. By the Roman law, the share of the firstborn was no greater than that of the other children ; and the New Testament sets forth this view, making the redeemed equal to Christ, and Christ's possessions theirs. In the joint heirship we must not bring out the point that Christ is the rightful Heir, who shares His inheritance with the other children of God : it is ■ adoptive children that they get the

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inheritance, and Christ is so far only the means of it, as He gives them power to become sons of God.

THOLUCK.

The Holy Ghost could not express more danger in ■ man than when He calls him “the child of this world”; nor a worse disposition than when He calls him “the child of disobedience” and distrust; nor a worse pursuer of that ill disposition than when He calls him “the child of the devil”; nor ■ worse possessing of the devil than when He calls him “the child of perdition”; nor a worse execution of all this than when He calls him “the child of hell.” So it is also a high exaltation when the Holy Ghost draws our pedigree from any good thing, and calls us the children of that; as when He calls us “the children of Light,” that we have seen the Day-star arise; when He calls us “the children of the Bride-chamber,” begot in lawful marriage upon the true Church. These are fair approaches to the highest title of all—to be “the children of God”; and not children of God as every creature is a child of God, by having an image and impression of God in the very being thereof; but children so as that we are heirs; and heirs so that we are co-heirs with Christ, which is implied in this name “children of God.”—DONNE.

There is no sonship without spiritual birth, and no spiritual birth without Christ.—MACLAREN.

To be ■ child of God in the Scripture phrase is to be an heir of immortality, and to be an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; that is to say, either in actual possession of it, or in right and title to it.—ABP. SHARP.

THE DIVINE MYSTERIES

THE EXPECTATION OF CREATION

The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.

Rom. VIII. 19.

THE Creation has by many been erroneously taken in an arbitrarily limited sense, as applying only to inanimate creation, or to mankind—(a)

of men not yet believers, (b) of the yet unconverted Gentiles, (c) of the yet unconverted Jews, (d) of the converted Gentiles, (f) of all Christians. The right explanation is, all animate and inanimate nature as distinguished from mankind.—DE WETTE.

The metaphor used by the Apostle in this verse is drawn either from birds that thrust a long neck out of a cage, as labouring for liberty ; or else from those that earnestly look and long for some special friends coming.

TRAPP.

“ The Creation,” as brought in here, expecting our future happiness, is used, as the Prophets speak, when they introduce the woods rejoicing, the mountains leaping, the floods clapping their hands, to express the exceeding great joy that should be among mankind at the first coming of our Lord.—THEODORET.

God will not only make the earth, but also heaven, more beautiful. This present time is His working garb ; afterward He will put on an Easter coat and ■ Pentecostal robe.—LUTHER.

The creation will be free from the bondage of corruption ; that is, it will no more be corruptible, but will keep pace with the glorification of your body. As it became corruptible when you did, so will it again follow you when you become immortal.—GERLACK.

It must be a prospect pleasing to God Himself to see His creation drawing nearer to Him by greater degrees of resemblance.—ADDISON.

THE SPIRIT OF INTERCESSION

*The Spirit himself maketh
intercession for us . . .*

Rom. VIII. 26.

NO intercession in heaven is here spoken of, but a pleading in us by the indwelling Spirit, of a nature above our comprehension and utterance. The Holy Spirit of God dwelling in us, knowing our wants better than we, Himself pleads in our prayers, raising us to higher and holier desires than we can express in words, which can only find utterance in sighings and aspirations. God the great Heart Searcher interprets the inarticulate sighings of the Spirit in us, not, strictly speaking, because He is Omniscience, but because the Spirit who pleads does so in pursuance of the Divine purposes and in conformity with God's good pleasure. All these pleadings of the Spirit are heard and answered, even when inarticulately uttered : we may extend the same comforting assurance to the imperfect and mistaken verbal utterances of our prayers, which are not themselves answered to our hurt, but the answer is given to the voice of the Spirit which speaks through them, which we would express, but cannot.—ALFORD.

If we look up we have a Comforter in heaven, even Christ Himself : and, if we look down, we have a Comforter on earth—His Spirit : and so we are at anchor in both. For, as He doth in heaven for us, so doth the Spirit on earth in us ; frame our petitions, and make intercession for us with sighs that cannot be expressed.—ANDREWES.

As, without the intercession of Christ, we cannot have our prayers accepted, so without the intercession of the Spirit we cannot pray.—SOUTH.

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PROVIDENCE

We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.

Rom. VIII. 28.

ALL things, that is, all providences especially, work together for good to them that love God. And how do they work for their good, but by making them more good and more holy? Providences

are good and evil to us, as they find or make us better or worse : nothing is good to him that is evil. As God makes use of all the seasons of the year for the harvest—the frost and cold of winter, as well as the heat of the summer—so doth He of fair and foul, pleasing and unpleasing, providences for promoting holiness. Winter-providences kill the weeds of lusts, and summer-providences ripen and mellow the fruits of righteousness. It is a sweet meditation Parisiensis hath upon this text. “Thy afflictions do work together with other providential dealings of God for good ; yea, thy chief good : and thou couldst as ill spare their help, as any other means, which God appoints thee.”—GURNALL.

God changeth our wounds into spangles of beauty.

TRAPP.

The bosom of Providence is the great moral crucible in which things work, in which they work together. They assimilate, repel, interpenetrate, change each other, and then leave, as moral result, one grand influence in the main for each character, for each man. The innumerable things that mingle in that crucible, if taken separately, would be seen working to separate and diverse results ; as, indeed, they still do in a measure, within the sphere of the all-commanding influence. But the one master influence now rule the

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whole process, and so combines the specific elements as to perpetuate and increase its own sway.

ALEX. RALEIGH.

All your trials shall work for your good. Why then should you fret, seeing God designs your good in all ? The bee sucks sweet honey out of the bitterest herbs ; so God will by afflictions teach His children to suck sweet knowledge, sweet obedience, and sweet experience out of all the bitter afflictions He exercises them with. That scouring and rubbing which frets others shall make them shine the brighter ; and that weight which crushes and keeps others under shall but make them, like the palm tree, grow better and higher ; and that hammer which knocks others all in pieces shall but knock them nearer to Christ, the corner-stone. Stars shine brightest in the darkest night ; torches give the best light when beaten ; grapes yield most wine when most pressed ; spices smell sweetest when pounded ; vines are the better for bleeding ; gold looks the better for scouring ; juniper smells sweetest in the fire ; chamomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it. Where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest ; and grace that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose-leaves, is then most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out.—BROOKS.

We are to think thus of the just man—that if he happen to be in poverty or in diseases, or in any other of those seeming evils, these things to him issue in something good, either whilst alive or dead.—PLATO.

All disasters which to other men seem evils will be attenuated, and turn to good, if your virtue riseth eminently above them. Only be assured that nothing is good but what is virtuous.—SENECA.

PREDESTINATION

For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren ; and whom he foreordained, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Rom. VIII. 29-30.

ON the subject of the pre-science and predestination mentioned here, verses 29 and 30, vast volumes have been written, and the Christian world greatly agitated and perplexed. These doctrines of men have very little place in the texts in question. After a long and serious investigation of this business, I am led to conclude that, whether the

doctrine of the decrees be true or false, it does not exist in these verses.

No portion of the word of God has been more unhappily misunderstood than several parts of the Epistle to the Romans ; because men have applied to individuals what belongs to nations ; and referred to eternity transactions which have taken place in time.

After having shown that the whole Gentile world was groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, he shows that it was according to the affectionate purpose of God that the Gentiles should be also called into the glorious liberty of the sons of God—into equal privileges with the Jews. He therefore represents them as objects of God's gracious foreknowledge.

He had from the beginning a gracious purpose to them as well as to the Jews ; and being thus graciously disposed towards them, He determined that they should be taken into His Church and be conformed to the image of His Son. Having thus foreknown and

predestinated them also, He called them also by the Gospel : He justified them also on their believing ; and He glorified them also with the same privileges, blessings, honours, and divine gifts : so that the Gentiles were now what the Jews had been before, the peculiar people of God. The Apostle, therefore, speaks here not of what they should be, or of what they might be, but of what they then were—the called, the justified, the highly honoured of God.—A. CLARKE.

St. Paul does not fix the number of those who are called, justified, glorified, to be absolutely equal ; he does not affirm that the believer may not fail between the special call and final glory ; nor does he deny that there are also persons called who may not be justified ; but he shows that God, as far as He Himself is concerned, conducts His people from step to step.—BENGEL.

We are nowhere commanded to pry into these secrets, but the wholesome counsel and advice given us is this—to “ make our calling and election sure.” We have no warrant in Scripture to peep into these hidden Rolls and Volumes of Eternity, and to make it our first thing we do, when we come to Christ, to spell out our names in the stars, and to persuade ourselves that we are certainly elected unto everlasting happiness, before we see “ the Image of God in righteousness and true holiness ” shaped in our hearts. God’s everlasting Decree is too dazzling and bright an object for us at first to set our eyes upon : it is far easier and safer for us to look upon the rays of His goodness and holiness, ■ they are reflected in our own hearts, and there to read the mild and gentle characters of God’s love to us in our love to Him, and our hearty compliance with His heavenly will. The way to obtain a good assurance indeed of our title to

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heaven is not to clamber up to it by a ladder of our own ungrounded persuasions, but to dig as low as hell by humility and self-denial in our own hearts ; and though this may seem to be the furthest way about, yet it is indeed the nearest and safest way to it. We must, as the Greek epigram speaks, "ascend downward and descend upward," if we would indeed come to heaven, or get any true persuasion of our title to it.

RALPH CUDWORTH.

If you have not faith, then know that predestination is too high a matter for you to be disputers of until you have been to the school-house of repentance and justification, wherein we must be conversant and learned before we go to the university of God's predestination and providence.—TRAPP.

Mark in what order : first, our calling ; then, our election : not beginning with our election first. It were as bold, as absurd, a presumption in vain men first to begin at heaven, and from thence to descend to earth. We must ascend from earth to heaven ; by our calling, arguing our election.—BP. HALL.

Let no man soar aloft to know whether he be elected or not, but let him gather the knowledge of his election from the effectualness of his calling and the sanctification of his life, the true and proper effects of a lively faith stamping the image of God's election in his soul.

NEGUS.

Eternal life is granted to us in election, promised in our vocation, sealed in our justification, possessed in our glorification.—BERNARD.

ALMIGHTY LOVE

I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom. VIII. 38-39.

IS this he who lately cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" who now triumphs? O happy man! Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Yes, it is the same. Pained then with the thoughts of that miserable conjunction with a body of death, and so crying out, "who will deliver, who will separate me from that?" now, now he hath found a Deliverer to do that for him; to whom he is for ever united; and he glories now in His inseparable union and unalterable love, which none can divide him from. Yea, it is through Him, that, presently after that word of complaint, he praises God; and now, in Him he triumphs. So vast a difference is there betwixt a Christian taken in himself, and in Christ! When he views himself in himself, then he is nothing but a poor, miserable, polluted, perishing wretch; but then he looks again, and sees himself in Christ; and there he is rich, and safe, and happy; he triumphs and he glories in it, above all the painted prosperities, and against all the horrid adversities of the world. And he extends his triumph; he makes a common good of it to all believers, speaks it in their name; "Who shall separate us?" and would have them partake of the same confidence, and speak in the same style with him.—ABP. LEIGHTON.

From this love nothing *can* separate us, because it

is all-powerful, all-embracing, and, finally, all-conquering.—VAN OOSTERZEE.

As we are the objects of that love which God hath commanded to us in His Son, it follows that no bounds can be set to our happiness—that there is no treasure too rich in the mines of the blessed God, no duration too long in eternity, no communion with the Creator too close, too intimate, too tender, which we have not a right to expect ; according to that comfortable, that ecstatic maxim of the apostle : “ He who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? ”

SAURIN.

Here Love was in its zenith, in its vertical point ; and in a direct line it casts its rays of comfort on His lost creature. Here the argument is at its highest, and St. Paul draws it down from the greater to the less, and the conclusion is full, full of comfort to all. He that gives a talent will certainly give a mite : He that gives His Son will also give salvation ; and He that gives salvation will give all things which may work it out. He that delivered His Son is followed with a—how shall He not with Him give us all things ? It is impossible it should be otherwise : so that Christ comes not naked, but clothed with blessings ; He comes not empty, but with the riches of heaven, with the treasures of wisdom and happiness. Christ comes not alone, but with troops of angels, with glorious promises and blessings ; nay, it is His nakedness that clothed us ; His poverty that enricheth us ; His no-reputation that ennobles us ; His emptying Himself that fills us ;—His being delivered for us delivers to us the possession of all things. “ All things ” is of large compass, large enough to take in the whole world ; but then it is the

world transformed and altered, the world conquered by faith, the world in subjection to Christ.—FARINDON.

Let him that is pursued with any particular temptation invest God, as God is a “refuge,” ■ sanctuary. Let him that is buffeted with the messenger of Satan, battered with his own concupiscence, receive God, as God is his “defence” and target. Let him that is shaken with perplexities in his understanding, or scruples in his conscience, lay hold upon God, as God is his “rock” and his anchor. Let him that hath any diffident jealousy or suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, ■ God is his “Salvation.” And let him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God, as God is his “glory.” Any of these notions is enough to any man ; but God is all these, and all else, that souls can think, to every man.—DONNE.

If hunger assails me, it cannot hurt me, for I have the Bread of Life. Nakedness cannot harm me, for I am clothed with Christ. I will not fear danger, for Christ is my safety. The sword cannot terrify me, for I have the sword of the Spirit.—ORIGEN.

No one can separate me from the love of God by menaces of death, for the Love of God cannot die, and it is death not to love God. Neither height nor depth can separate me ; for what joy can they offer to tempt me from the Creator of Heaven ? Or why should hell itself terrify me, so as to make me forsake God, since I can never know hell except by forsaking Him ?

AUGUSTINE.

Whatsoever shall befall, we are knit to God through Jesus Christ His Son.—ERASMUS.

THE DIVINE MYSTERIES

ELECTION

Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay . . .

Rom. IX. 20-21.

THE ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is the ninth. Learn first the eight chapters which precede it. Who hath not known passion, cross, and travail of death, cannot treat of foreknowledge without injury and inward enmity towards God.

Wherefore, take heed that thou drink not wine while thou art yet ■ sucking babe.—LUTHER.

It must be remembered that whatever inferences may justly lie from the Apostle's arguments with regard to God's disposal of individuals, the assertions here made by him are universally spoken with ■ national reference. Of the eternal salvation or rejection of any individual Jew there is here no question; and however logically true of any individual the same conclusion may be shown to be, we know as matter of fact that in such cases not the divine, but the human side, is that ever held up by the Apostle: the universality of free grace for all—the riches of God's mercy to all who call on Him, and consequent exhortations to all to look to Him and be saved. The apparent inconsistencies of the Apostle, at one time speaking of absolute decrees of God, and at another of culpability in man—at one time of the election of some, at another of a hope of the conversion of all—resolve themselves into the necessary conditions of thought under which we all are placed, being compelled to acknowledge the Divine Sovereignty on the one hand, and human free will on the other, and alternately appearing to lose sight of one as often as we confine our view to the other.—ALFORD.

The exclusion of the Jews from the blessings of God's kingdom, in contrast with the reception of the Gentiles, presents an apparent problem in God's government. By the light of Scripture and experience the Apostle gradually comes to the conviction that this mode of action is in no degree at variance with God's faithfulness, since His ancient promises were only to the true, the believing Israel : even less with His holiness, since the rejection of Israel is merely the righteous punishment of their unbelief ; and least of all with His truth, mercy, and grace, since the fall of Israel was the receiving of the Gentiles, and should afterward be followed by their rising again. Thus the whole divine scheme passes in broad outline before his eyes. From the dazzling summit of faith he gazes into a depth which causes him to sink down in adoration. It is a depth, first of riches, that is to say, of grace, which thus has mercy on sinners without distinction ; then of wisdom, which chooses the best means for this highest aim ; lastly, of knowledge, which is here determinate prescience, which in the repose of eternity has foreseen and foreordained all, in order that in the fullness of time it may come to pass.—VAN OOSTERZEE.

We acknowledge that God, in the use of His Sovereignty, may deal differently with several of His creatures ; and yet, where He deals better, He doth not reward ; and where He deals worse, He doth not punish. He may make one a vessel of higher use, another of inferior use. But this is neither the reward of any man's virtue, nor the punishment of any man's fault. These things are as God pleaseth. All these differences are within the latitude of God's Sovereignty, and speak nothing either of love or hatred.—WHICHCOTE.

God does not make, but find, Vessels of wrath. He

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does not find, but make, Vessels of grace. Therefore all murmuring is excluded on the one hand, and all boasting on the other.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

In the commentary to the Romans that passes under Jerome's name, a very remarkable interpretation is given to the argument from the potter's handiwork. Instead of the phrase being understood to express the vast distance between God and man, and thus teach humility and acquiescence, it is taken as implying man's free will, as though the force of it were: The vessel of potter's clay cannot answer its maker, but your very question is an expostulation with Him, and shows that you have an independent will.—J. H. LUPTON.

Human reason will dispute against the justice of God to the end of the world; but this single text is sufficient to confound it. If we find any other answer than this of St. Paul, let us fear lest it is suggested to us by the spirit of presumption. It is the nature of the dreadful and astonishing pride of the heart of man to attribute to himself the good which God works in him, and to cast upon God the wickedness of his own heart, in imputing to Him the loss which comes entirely from himself. God never wills sin; on the contrary, He permits it, only to destroy it the more effectively. Who can with the least shadow of reason complain that out of one and the same lump or mass of human kind, tainted with sin and condemned to death, God takes one part, in order to make His grace known therein by saving it.—QUESNEL.

According to Paul, no man is elect except he is "in Christ." We are all among the non-elect until we are in Him. But once in Christ, we are caught in the currents of the eternal purposes of the Divine love; we belong to the elect race.—R. W. DALE.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

The righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down :) or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart . . .

Rom. X. 6-8.

THE righteousness of faith speaks even in Moses, if Moses be properly understood and explained. The truth of the inward essence of the Law, like that of the Gospel, and therefore the truth of the whole saving revelation of God, is based on its inward character—on its inward union with the most inward nature of man.—LANGE.

In the original text Moses is speaking of God's command to Israel to fulfil His law. "This commandment," he says, "is not beyond the reach of accomplishment, nor out of the range of man's moral or mental life. It is not up in heaven, nor is it beyond (St. Paul substitutes 'beneath') the sea : so that a man must mount to the one or traverse (or sound) the other, in order to fetch it. On the contrary, Israel repeats this commandment in everyday talk, and it is stamped upon Israel's heart, in order that he may accomplish it." For St. Paul this language really describes the facility of faith in Christ more accurately than that of obedience to the Mosaic Law. The Apostle sees in this aspect of the old Law something typical of the new—a virtual prophecy of the righteousness of faith. He adapts the quotation from the passage to its ultimate and deepest sense, partly by alteration, and partly by omission of that which was not relevant. St. Paul puts the quotation in the mouth of "the righteousness which is of faith," which is

boldly personified, as forbidding questions that imply unbelief in the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ, and as directing men to the Word of Faith—that is, the Gospel Revelation as a whole—which is deposited in man's very heart and mouth by the preaching of the Apostles.—LIDDON.

Here the Apostle personifies the righteousness by faith, and makes it say of its doctrines and precepts what Moses said concerning his commandment. Things obscure and difficult were said by the Hebrews to be “far off”: but things easily understood and easily attained were said to be “nigh,” or “present.” The duty of faith was of this latter character.

MACKNIGHT.

The way of acceptance with God is so clearly stated and discovered in the Gospel that we need not be in any doubtful suspense where to find it, or seek other satisfaction than God has given us in His word.

BURKITT.

Justification by faith in Christ is a plain, intelligible doctrine. It is not shut up in mysterious language, but like what Moses says of the statutes he gave to Israel, it is plain, intelligible, accessible. It is not in the books of countries beyond the impassable ocean; not in the mysterious book of God in heaven, yet undisclosed; not in the world beneath, which none can penetrate and return to disclose its secrets. It is brought before the mind and heart of everyone, thus leaving him without excuse for unbelief.—STUART.

When we speak of looking upon Christ, and receiving Christ, and feeding upon Christ, it is not upon Christ in heaven, nor Christ in the deep, that we mean; but Christ in the promise, exhibited to us, and offered in the word.—HENRY.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all

Rom. XI. 32.

THE expression "hath shut up" is based on the metaphor of a prison in which those whose guilt is alike are shut up together. The whole passage represents God, not as the author of sin, but as one who distributes in equal measure the evil which has been generated by the misused free will of the creature, in order to afford a possibility of salvation to all.—OLSHAUSEN.

God is represented as giving over all men, both Jews and Gentiles, to disobedience, without power of escape; a bold and striking declaration of God's all-ruling Providence, forcing even sin into the service of His mercy.—GIFFORD.

God hath not shut them up that they might remain in disobedience, but that He might save them.

CHRYSOSTOM.

A weighty sentence embracing the whole course of human history, and summing up the divine philosophy of the whole matter.—SANDAY.

The web of Providence is wonderfully woven. Good and evil are made with equal certainty, under the government of infinite wisdom and benevolence, to result in the promotion of God's gracious and glorious designs.

HODGE.

The tangled web of human history is only intelligible when this is taken as its clew, "From Him are all things, and to Him are all things."—MACLAREN.

THE HOLY LIFE

SACRIFICE

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not fashioned according to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Rom. XII. 1-2.

ST. PAUL might have commanded, but for love's sake he doth rather entreat, making his affection manifest in these sweet terms. The mercies of God to me, the mercies of God to you, be many. I beseech you therefore, by the riches of His abundant mercy, make your bodies a living sacrifice. St. Paul here means a sacrifice by doing, and that our service may be well accepted of God, two

things are required especially, namely, that it be grounded upon His word, and that it be performed in faith.

Now, as musicians do not only teach their scholars what they shall sing, but also what they shall not sing, that they may follow that which is good and eschew that which is evil, the Apostle doth also show us what we must not do : " Fashion not ourselves like unto this world." The " world " is used in the sense of either the wicked men of the world or else of the vain things of the world. St. Paul, understanding how prone we are to follow fashions, adviseth us here not to conform ourselves to the world. In compliments of courtesies and common civilities it is not amiss to follow either the most or the best. In matters of Church orders and ceremonies it is insolent singularity not to fashion ourselves according to that which is enjoyed by the

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best, and used by the most ; yea, in the main points of holy religion, if the great be good, and the most be best, we may follow both. But St. Paul's meaning is, that we may not follow wicked men in their wickedness, nor worldly men in their worldliness, nor good men but in that they are good.—DEAN BOYS.

The idea contained in sacrifice is that of dedication. We are to dedicate our bodies to God. But there is to be this distinction between the old Jewish sacrifice and the Christian sacrifice : the one was of dead animals, the other of the living man. The worshipper must offer or present, before God, himself, with all his living energies and powers directed consciously to God's service. The English phrase "reasonable service" is somewhat ambiguous. It might mean "a service demanded by reason." Such, however, is not the sense of the Greek, but rather "■ service of the reason," i.e. a service rendered by the reason. Just as under the old dispensation the mind expressed its devotion through the ritual of sacrifice, so now under the new dispensation its worship takes the form of ■ self-dedication ; its service consists in holiness of life, temperance, soberness, and chastity.—SANDAY.

The body of the Christian is called ■ sacrifice, first, because in one sense it is dead, and, secondly, ■■ it is wholly dedicated to God. As he is one with Christ in His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, he is also like Him in being a sacrifice, not because of the sins of others, but to put an end to sin in himself.—B. JOWETT.

How is the body to become a sacrifice ? Let thine eye look upon no evil thing, and it hath become ■ sacrifice ; let thy tongue speak nothing evil, and it hath become an offering ; let thy hand do no lawless

deed, and it hath become a whole burnt-offering. But this is not enough, we must do good works also ; let the hand do alms, the mouth bless them that despitefully use us, and the ear find leisure evermore for the hearing of Scripture. For sacrifice can be made only of that which is clean ; sacrifice is a firstfruit of other actions. Let us, then, from our hands, and feet, and mouth, and all our other members, yield a firstfruit unto God.—CHRYSOSTOM.

We present our bodies to God when we are ready and prepared to carry out that which the Holy Spirit shall inspire us, and shall move us, to do with all the members of our bodies. Make it your aim also that the service which you have to render to God be not that of irrational animals, but that it be of your bodies as endowed with a rational soul. And do not content yourselves with mere nonconformity to this world, but advancing further, seek to transform your bodies to a corresponding renovation with that of your minds, so that your bodies may no longer exercise themselves but in that which shall be conformable to the duty of regeneration and the renewal of your minds. The proof of the will of God consists not in knowledge but in experience.—JUÁN DE VALDÉS.

The Romans should be transformed to a new sense and judgment of things ; they should prove and make manifest by their deeds what the will of God is, and what is good and perfect and well-pleasing to God instead of to themselves ; they should henceforth show that they have now not their own will, but the will of God in them, and that all things belonging to man have an upward aim and direction ; the body towards reason, the reason towards God ; that the former, by obeying the soul and reason, may become rational ;

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and the reason and soul of man, by being subject and surrendered to God, may itself become divine.

COLET.

Conformity to the world does not consist in joining in the pleasures with which God who made the world has filled it. It does not consist in pursuing the occupations by which the work of the world is done. It does not consist in allowing proper play to the natural impulses. All these things, though they can be made worldly, yet are not worldly in themselves. By being conformed to this world, the Apostle plainly means the moulding of the life and character by the system which prevails around you, and not by the higher teaching which reaches your heart and conscience.

BP. F. TEMPLE.

Only the man who is renewed in the spirit of his mind can ascertain and assay God's will, and form a just estimate of what it is.—BP. WORDSWORTH.

He discerns with judgment of those things which are good, as he that hath a perfect taste discerneth of the goodness of meats.—ED. LEWIS.

By this gift of spiritual judgment we discern and approve that God's will is good, lovely, and complete.

DIODATI.

Deem that sacrifice to be the most beautiful, and that worship to be the most acceptable, if thou makest thyself a good and most just character ; there is greater hope that the immortal gods will be more willing to listen to such, than to those who offer many victims.

ISOCRATES.

I perceive myself not to be amended merely, but to be transformed,—SENECA,

SERVICE

We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members of another.

Rom. XII. 5.

HE that hath not fellowship may suspect worthily that he is not a lively member of Christ, for His body is coupled, and knit throughout every joint, wherewith one ministereth to another. There is no dead or idle member in the body, and every one is serviceable for the good of the whole.—DEAN BOYS.

The Spirit resolves the variety into unity, introduces variety into the unity, and reconciles unity to itself through variety.—BAUR.

Christ is the unifying principle in the Church, just as the personality or will is the unifying principle in man. Strictly speaking, the members are called members in their relation to the body, and not in their relation to each other.—SANDAY.

He is the Head, not only that He is the chief, we say that the king is the head of the kingdom ; but also that as energy descends from the head of a man through all the man's members, so from Christ virtue descends through all who are His members.—JUÁN DE VALDÉS.

St. Paul would have the Church imitate the structure of the body in its order, adjustment, connection, mutual offices, and tempering of forces ; since it is from moderation, order, and love that all things are established in beauty.—COLET.

Our souls are connected and intimately joined to God, as being indeed members and distinct portions of His essence ; and must not He be sensible of every movement of them as belonging and co-natural to Himself ?—EPICTETUS.

MYSTICAL UNION

*Put ye on the Lord Jesus
Christ . . .*

Rom. XIII. 14.

AS we must put off the old man, so put on the new man, and that is done two ways, either by putting on His merits or by putting on His manners.—DEAN BOYS.

He only hath put on Christ, which hath Christ in himself by faith, and shows Him to others by his works. There is a degree of vanity and pride, whereby some delight to wear their richest clothes innermost, and most out of sight ; but, in this double garment of a Christian, it is necessarily so ; for faith is the richest and most precious part of this garment ; and this, which is our holy-day garment, is worn innermost ; for our faith is only seen of God, but our outward garment, of works, which is our worky-day garment, that is our sanctification, is seen of all the world. And that also must be put on ; or else, we have not put on Christ ; and it must cover us all over ; that is, our sanctification must go through our whole life in a constant and even perseverance.—DONNE.

To be clothed with a person is a Greek phrase, signifying to assume the interests of another—to enter into his views, to imitate him, and be wholly on his side. The mode of speech is taken from the custom of stage players ; they assumed the name and garments of the person whose character they were to act, and endeavoured as closely as possible to imitate him in their spirit, words, and actions.—A. CLARKE.

I understand that a man puts on Christ, by recovering in himself that image and likeness of God which Adam lost.—JUÁN DE VALDÉS.

CONVICTION

One man esteemeth one day above another : another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.

Rom. XIV. 5.

in a spacious lake.—BENGEL.

Let a man be carried on by conviction ; let him sail on quietly, as it were, with a fair wind of persuasion filling the sails of his mind.—Bp. WORDSWORTH.

The word “fully assured” which the Apostle useth signifies, not to abound in sense, as the scholars translate it, but to be assuredly persuaded in heart of that which is done. It is a metaphorical word, and seemeth to be borrowed from ■ ship under full sail, that hath both wind and tide with it, to carry it with a straight and speedy course to the desired point, and nothing to hinder it.—E. LEIGH.

The setting apart of special days for the service of God is ■ confession of our imperfect state, an avowal that we cannot or do not devote our whole time to Him. Sabbaths will ultimately be superseded when our life becomes one eternal Sabbath.—Bp. LIGHTFOOT.

This individual liberty of conscience is with the Apostle an essential part of the Gospel, a law for ourselves, and to be respected in others.—B. JOWETT.

Whoever denies his own will to become the will-less organ of another man, denies the image of God in the dignity of his own free personality —NEANDER.

COMPASSION

*Destroy not with thy meat
him for whom Christ died.*

Rom. XIV. 15.

DO not value thy food
more than Christ valued
His life.—BENGEL.

Christian love is more
precious than Christian liberty.—FARRAR.

The Gospel is the law of freedom, and cannot by any possibility admit scruples respecting meats and drinks. But when we have not our own case to consider, but that of our brethren, the very same principle of freedom leads us to avoid giving offence by our freedom. Our brother sees strongly the sin and guilt of what we nevertheless know to be our Christian liberty, and love must induce us to abridge our rights for his sake. Yet we cannot say that we must give up everything that offends our brother. Such a rule would be impracticable, and if not impracticable, often full of evil. It was not the rule which St. Paul himself adopted with the Judaisers, "to whom he gave way, no, not for an hour." It is not the rule which he enjoins when matters of importance are at stake; and the most indifferent things cease to be indifferent the moment an attempt is made to impose them upon others. Only in reference to the particular circumstances of the Church, and to the passions of men ever prone to exaggerate their party differences, the rule of consideration for others is the safer side.—B. JOWETT.

No man can live happily who lives to himself alone, and considers nothing but his own advantage; you must live for others if you would live honourably for yourself.—SENECA.

Free in faith, serving in love.—GREGORY.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Rom. XIV. 17.

THE Kingdom of God does not consist of sensual goods, but of Christian graces. The Kingdom of which the Apostle is speaking is the life hidden with Christ and God ;

not the visible Church, or the doctrine which Christ and His Apostles taught. He describes the inward and moral character of the Kingdom. To us Christian character naturally suggests ideas of sorrow, of peace, of consolation, and not so naturally the ideas of joy and glorying which constantly recur in the writings of St. Paul. These seem to belong to that circle of Christian graces, which have almost vanished in the phraseology of modern times.—B. JOWETT.

Christianity is called the Kingdom of God because it is a religion intended to rule us.—HENRY.

The eternal reign of all that is divine over the world.

MARTINEAU.

Wherever you find faith, and righteousness, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, look upon them as the stamped coin of Christ's Kingdom, and as a legal tender from God to you.—BEECHER.

The whole weight is rested on the inward disposition, on the new relation to God, on the new life of the Spirit, on the new righteousness proceeding from that life, on the new privileges of the sons of God.—ORR.

The Kingdom of God is the heavenly sphere of life, in which God's word and spirit govern, and whose organ on earth is the Church.—LANGE.

HOPE

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Rom. XV. 13.

A NAME glorious to God, and a name hitherto unknown to the Gentiles. For Hope had been one of their false deities, whose temple, according to Livy, was struck with lightning and burnt.—BENGEL.

The sails of a ship are not more swelled with a fresh gale of wind, nor the channels of water more raised at full sea, nor the air more full of light when the sun shines, than that soul is filled, and, as it were, swollen with inward comfort, which feels these good hopes in God grow strong within it, and earnestly expects the glory of the Lord Jesus.—PATRICK.

The God of Revelation, the God of the Covenant, can alone inspire and support the expectation of a world-wide Gospel.—WESTCOTT.

God is the God of hope ; and not only of the first seed and habit, but of the whole increment, and abounding of it in us also.—GURNALL.

O Lord our God, under the shadow of Thy wings be our hope.—AUGUSTINE.

You ought not to cast away good hopes, since He that reigns supreme has allotted unmixed evil for none.
SOPHOCLES.

Where men revere the gods—is it unreasonable that men should be there full of good hopes ?—XENOPHON.

At length I got into the gladsome hill where lay my hope.—HERBERT.

PEACE

*Now the God of peace be with
you all.*

Rom. XV. 33.

THROUGH the Old Testament you shall observe God's great title is "the Lord of Hosts," which in the New you shall never read ; but, ever since He rose from the dead, it is, instead of it, the God of peace—to the Romans, Philippians, Thessalonians, etc., and to the Hebrews—and still the God of peace. It is not amiss for us, this change. For, if "the Lord of Hosts" come to be "at peace" with us, His Hosts shall be all for us, which were against us while it was no peace ; make but God the God of peace, and it is enough. His peace will command His power.—ANDREWES.

God is our very peace ; He is our sure Keeper when we are ourselves in unpeace, and He continually worketh to bring us into endless peace.

LADY JULIAN OF NORWICH.

When shall I rest in Thee alone, O my God ? When shall I taste with Thee, and in Thee, the delicious fruit of a profound peace ?—AVRILLON.

The peace of Christ was the fruit of combined toil and trust ; enabling Him in the one case to do things tranquilly, in the other to see things tranquilly.

MARTINEAU.

The peace of Christ, like the peace of God, is larger and deeper than reconciliation : it includes all that is included in perfect spiritual prosperity, and therefore compasses the soul around with goodness and "passeth understanding."—W. B. POPE.

Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith ; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.

Rom. XVI. 25-27.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
CRITICALLY CONSIDERED

BY

JAMES MOFFATT, D.D., D.LITT.

THE
THIRD
STUDY

Rom.—I

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THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

CRITICALLY CONSIDERED

BY JAMES MOFFATT, D.D., D.LITT.

“**I** THINK,” Coleridge wrote in his *Table Talk* (June 15th, 1833), “St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans the most profound work in existence ; and I hardly believe that the writings of the old Stoics, now lost, could have been deeper. Undoubtedly it is, and must be, very obscure to ordinary readers ; but some of the difficulty is accidental, arising from the form in which the Epistle appears. If we could now arrange this work in the way in which we may be sure St. Paul would himself do, were he now alive and preparing it for the press, his reasoning would stand out clear. His accumulated parentheses would be thrown into notes, or extruded to the margin.” To follow up Coleridge’s hint does make one or two passages less obscure. Thus, in ch. ii. ver. 16 is the sequel to vers. 13, while vers. 14 and 15 are a parenthesis ; the first clause of vi. 19 (“ I speak after the manner of men, because of your infirmity ”) is an aside, and so is the second part of vii. 25 (“ So then . . . the law of sin ”), which ought to lie between verses 23 and 24 ; viii. 36 (“ As it is written . . . slaughter ”) should be also in brackets, like x. 17 (“ So then . . . the word of God ”). But all this touches no more than the fringe of the Epistle’s difficulty. If the Apostle’s argument is to stand out clear

At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn,

if “ some things hard to be understood ” in his reasoning are to be elucidated, much more has to be done, even in the way of literary criticism, than Coleridge realised ; the structure of the Epistle requires to be examined closely, and its composition analysed.

From xv. 19-28 it is plain that the Apostle wrote this letter towards the close of his mission in Achaia, probably about A.D. 57, when he was starting for Jerusalem with the collection which his Churches had raised on behalf of the poor Christians in Palestine. He had not yet visited Rome, but he promises to do so on his way to a new mission-field in Spain. Now, xvi. 1-23 (ver. 24 being a later insertion) contains a number of greetings to friends, whereas in the earlier part of the letter the Apostle writes as a comparative stranger to strangers. The obvious inference is that this section includes a note originally meant for some other circle with which he was in close touch. Some of the names, it is true, are to be found later in connection with Rome. But, even if they refer to the same persons, this does not prove that these people were at Rome when St. Paul wrote *Romans*. They may have migrated to the capital afterwards; there is no evidence that he was on such intimate terms with a large group of Christians at Rome when he penned this epistle, and the likelihood is, either that xvi. 1-23 contains a letter which was written subsequently to Rome, or that it represents a note of commendation for Phœbe, sent to some circle or Church with whom he was on intimate terms, perhaps the Church of Ephesus. The wealth of colour and detail in xvi. 1-23 implies a sphere in which he had lived and worked, ■ he had not done at Rome. Furthermore, the warning in vers. 17 and 18 against dissensions and false teachers (with their propaganda against the Apostle) does not fit the Roman Church at this period so well as a Church like that of Ephesus. We cannot explain the warning by arguing that it is prophylactic, ■ though St. Paul were putting his readers on their guard against trouble that might

occur, for he is plainly writing against ■ movement already in progress, and of this there is no hint in the earlier part of the Epistle. Consequently it is fair to assume that xvi. 1-23 contains a letter of introduction for Phœbe, ■ deaconess of the local Church at Cenchreæ, the port of Corinth, a letter which may have been written at the same time as *Romans*. How it ever came to be incorporated in this Epistle, we do not know; the available information about the editing of the Pauline Epistles is too indirect and fragmentary to yield any decisive data. But that the Epistles were collected and in some cases rearranged is plain from the structure of the Corinthian Epistles, and if the editing of ■ Pauline corpus took place at Corinth or at Ephesus, this note may have been put in the wake of *Romans*, particularly if the larger Epistle came, as it does in the Muratorian Canon, at the close of the seven letters addressed to Churches. When this small note of introduction is assigned to a later date and supposed to have been sent to the Church of Rome, it becomes more easy to understand how it was added to the earlier and larger letter. But in any case the original Epistle to the Romans, ■ written about A.D. 57, did not extend beyond ch. xv.

The evidence for this conjecture is entirely internal. But there is some indirect manuscript evidence for the further theory that the Epistle circulated in two editions, one longer and the other shorter. From Origen and from the data of the early Latin version, prior to Jerome, we learn that an edition was in circulation which omitted xv.-xvi. and read xvi. 25-27 after xiv. 23. Also the words "in Rome" were omitted (in i. 7, 15) in some early copies. The omission of xv.-xvi. may have been due to the use of the

Epistle in the liturgy, these chapters being considered to be less edifying for public worship, and the omission of "in Rome" was possibly due to the same reason as led to the omission of "in Ephesus" (in Eph. i. 1), i.e. to a desire to make the reference of the letter more catholic in range. The shorter edition was used in the second century; indeed some attribute it to Marcion. But other critics assign both editions to the Apostle, supposing that the shorter was an encyclical, made by St. Paul either out of the original longer letter or as a first draft of it, or again that the shorter was designed by him for some other community. There is nothing unPauline in xv.-xvi. except the doxology, xvi. 25-27, which emphasises a silence upon the redeeming purpose before Christ, that is rather out of keeping with St. Paul's teaching. Otherwise the material of i.-xvi. may be held to have been written by the Apostle, although there is grave uncertainty as to when and how he composed it in such different forms as have been conjectured. That the original Epistle to the Romans did not contain xvi. 1-23 (in whole or part) is fairly clear. That St. Paul wrote two copies of his letter, one for Rome and the other for a different Church or a group of Churches, is a feasible hypothesis, although it must be admitted frankly that the details of the composition, in this case, are uncertain, and it is perhaps as likely that the data are explicable on the ground that second-century editors, either Marcion or churchmen at Corinth or Ephesus, handled the text thus. As for the omission of "in Rome," it is not unlikely that these words may have somehow been dropped out, just as xvi. 25-27 were inserted, by the churchmen in editing the epistle. But the literary problem is to be solved on general

lines by supposing that the original Epistle contained i. 1-xv. 33 substantially in its present form. Such was the Epistle which he wrote as he turned from Achaia to contemplate a new mission-field.

The position is significant. St. Paul had evangelised two mission-fields already, Asia and Europe (i.e. Macedonia and Achaia). He now looked towards the Roman side of the Mediterranean world, questing for a fresh sphere. His principle was to avoid any field already occupied. "From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (xv. 19, 20). He had often desired to visit Rome, and indeed he apologises for not having done so before. But the Gospel had been preached at Rome already by some other Christian evangelists, and therefore he cannot make it a mission-centre; he proposes to evangelise the important Roman province of Spain at the west of the Mediterranean. Egypt lay nearer, but Egypt must have been also visited by Christian missionaries. Spain is the next province he has in view, and on his way thither he agrees to visit the Roman Christians. Meantime he sends them this Epistle, to announce his coming and to do more. He pours out, as he does in no other letter, the fundamental conceptions of Christianity as he understood it, in order to gain their sympathy with him in the new undertaking. He takes occasion to set down the religious convictions of his mission, summing up, as it were, the forces and principles of his work and explaining his commission as an apostle of the faith "among all nations" (i. 5). In the light of the long experience behind him, when he had had to encounter criticism from Jews and from

Christians who were still unemancipated from Jewish sympathies, he restates his gospel as a gospel for the wide world, with a range which outwent Judaism. *Romans* is therefore more of a treatise or monologue than any other of the Pauline Epistles. It is not a complete summary of Paul's doctrine and practice, for he does not allude to topics like the Lord's Supper, eschatology, and the Resurrection. But he sets forth what he considered to be vital Christianity with special reference to the older Jewish religion, and also to the dangers of Antinomianism, which were particularly liable to beset Gentile Christians. What he knew of the Roman Christians was entirely from hearsay, but it was enough to enable him to write directly about perils and difficulties in their situation. He never calls them a "Church." Probably they were not organised as yet into any community, but were only small circles in the capital. Yet the tone of the Epistle indicates that the majority of those whom he has in mind were Gentle Christians, i.e. converts from paganism. "I speak to you Gentiles" (xi. 13). The context of passages like i. 5 f. and xv. 15 f. points to the same conclusion. Some Roman Christians would doubtless be Jews by birth, but the Apostle does not write as though there were friction between these two elements in the local Christian community. He addresses the Roman Christians as a unity, without distinguishing two parties, and the predominant complexion of the community appears to be Gentile Christian; that is, the members on the whole must have been proselytes, who had been won over to Christianity, and who needed a thoroughgoing statement of the Christian religion as the historical climax and true fulfilment of the Divine Revelation made of old under Judaism.

So one day a travelling Christian brought to this community a papyrus scroll containing the bulk of what is now included in Romans i.-xv., which had been dictated by the Apostle and was now read aloud at public worship for the instruction of the congregation. The functions of such an epistle were various. It might enforce discipline, or supply apostolic guidance, in the absence of the Apostle, or convey religious instruction. In any case it was read aloud in public, not privately studied at first. One wonders sometimes what sort of people they were who listened to an epistle like *Romans* for the first time, or indeed during the early period of the Church. Did they follow its deep arguments? Were they competent to take in what has puzzled later generations? We feel indeed the same wonder about the ancient Athenians, who listened to the Greek dramas of Æschylus or the speeches of Demosthenes. What manner of people were they to whom such masterpieces were addressed? Dr. Johnson dismisses them curtly as dull and stupid. "We see even what the boasted Athenians were. The little effect which Demosthenes' orations had upon them, shows that they were barbarians." But this is a superficial verdict. The Athenian audiences must have included many citizens who did appreciate fine writing and subtle thought. And in the New Testament period there must have been a proportion of hearers who did understand more or less of what was read to them from a script like *Romans*. Some would be puzzled, and it may be true that to a certain extent such an epistle would be over the heads of many who were in the primitive congregations. Not that this would necessarily render the reading altogether unedifying. Such hearers might well feel, like their modern

brethren in a Christian congregation, that something good was going on, even although the precise theological statement of the discourse was now and then unintelligible. The Apostle lets himself go, sometimes, in this Epistle ; he allows himself to be carried away by the rush and rhapsody of his own thought, as he develops an argument. But he did intend his hearers to understand him. He may not always have had them in mind. Possibly in addressing an unknown audience like this he took the liberty of expanding and expounding his thoughts, as a man might do in a dissertation, without constantly or consciously reflecting whether his readers would prove receptive. Nevertheless *Romans* is not an abstract treatise ; it is designed for living Christians face to face with doubts and difficulties which were familiar to the Apostle already in other connections. And if we are surprised at the lofty and even the technical passages in the Epistle being addressed to ordinary Christians, whom he plainly expected to follow the argument and benefit by the exhortation, we must bear in mind the following considerations.

(i) Our world is so different, that much sounds strange to us which may have been fairly familiar to them. We find it an effort, for example, to put ourselves back into an age when people could feel scruples of conscience about eating food bought in the public market which had originally been part of an animal dedicated to some pagan sacrifice (which is the point of xiv. 13 f.); or into the minds of good people who regarded vegetarianism as an essential method of the spiritual life, much less into the attitude of those who found a real difficulty in understanding why the Jews as a whole had rejected Christ, and how the Jewish nation might eventually play a leading rôle again in the

purpose of God (which is the thought stirring underneath ix.-xi.). But such thoughts and troubles were not uncommon in the days when the Apostle wrote. His hearers or readers in the first century required no explanations, as we do, of clean and unclean meat, for example, or of the prestige attaching to circumcision in Jewish religion. This Epistle deals with some issues that were burning in the first century; to us they are so many heaps of cold ashes, studied by anthropologists and antiquarians. Hence some of our enigmas in *Romans* were obvious enough to its early audiences.

(ii) While this is true, the power of the Epistle has been often felt by Christians who passed by such topics to reach the central message. *Romans* has been a power in the history of Christian thought and life, studied not merely by theologians like Augustine and Anselm, who absorbed its essential theme, but by reformers like Colet and Luther, who were inspired by it to recast the religion of their generation. Historical criticism was not their cue to *Romans*; it was the response of their souls to its revelation of faith, the intuitive sense of all that is vital in the Epistle. They discovered that it was charged with new and creative power for the Christian life, and while the discovery was in part due to contact with the original, which shone out from traditional misinterpretations or neglect in mediæval theology, the dominant impulse was a religious appreciation. These men realised that the Apostle in his arguments about the Law was not engaged in some merely passing debate, but contending for fundamental issues in the Christian religion. Their experience found itself echoed and corroborated in the Epistle. For the Epistle is written out of experience,

out of deep and prolonged experience of men and things. Thus, as Matthew Arnold remarks in *St. Paul and Protestantism*, a verse like vii. 23 is wrung out of what Paul had felt. "Paul did not go to Adam and Genesis to get the essential testimony about sin. He went to experience for it. 'I see,' he says, 'a law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity.' This is the essential testimony respecting sin to Paul—this rise of sin in his own heart and in the heart of all the men who hear him." Romans is rarely a difficult Epistle to natures of this inward kind; by a sure instinct they feel for its perennial message, undisturbed by this or that detail of the Apostle's argument; the burden of its counsel is felt, and felt apart from items of dialectic that are puzzling rather than convincing. The third and fourth chapters may have less for such souls than the first eleven verses of the fifth; chapters ix.-xi. may suggest to them that the writer's patriotic zeal is more conspicuous than his success in solving the problem which he raises. Yet the full tide of the argument throughout the Epistle sweeps them along, over or past any incidental difficulties.

Fundamentally this is a sound attitude. A book which is constantly read, a writer who is repeatedly and carefully studied, generally is understood in the main. Dr. Johnson once remarked, apropos of Addison's *Cato*, that "about things on which the public thinks long, it commonly attains to think right." This is not obscurantism but good sense, and *Romans* has been so long and so studiously read by people interested in its deep theme, that the leading features of its religious message have been on the whole grasped, whatever be the changes in critical opinion regarding

the origin and sources of the Apostle's theology. *Romans*, written out of experience, appeals to experience. The mental environment of readers to-day is very different from that of the first audience to which the Apostle appealed; the precise problem of the Law does not meet a modern as it met the Christians in St. Paul's world during the first century. Nevertheless the essential motives and instincts of human nature in religion survive unchanged. Thus, to take but one example: it is clear that the Apostle's thought originally moved in what may be called the apocalyptic sphere; he began by dwelling on the speedy return of Christ. Then, as his experience deepened, the present life became more and more significant for the Christian vocation. Justification looked towards the future judgment; it inspired a hope of acquittal at the end. But as the consciousness of what Christ meant to the forgiven soul grew upon the Apostle's mind, his statement came to include a larger emphasis upon the immediate position of faith. He still could speak of patient waiting, of anticipation, of hope for the future and final redemption. But also of the present—"there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." A large part of the interest of *Romans* lies in the transition which is obviously taking place between the earlier eschatological absorption of the Apostle and the fuller sense of the present life as a sphere for the Christian spirit; and this tension is the outcome of his experience. Similarly, the sense of Christianity as a catholic and all-embracing faith, which pervades *Romans*, makes its appeal to-day with special force. Here we find St. Paul stating it in terms of controversy in his own age. It is highly probable, as Mr. R. H. Hutton argued in his famous

review of Renan's *L'Apotre Paul*, that ■ craving for such a world-wide religion may have been stirring in St. Paul's mind even before his conversion. Certainly it helps to explain his criticism of the Jewish Law at several points in *Romans*, and also his longing for "some affinity with the keen philosophical intellect of the Greek, and the stately jurisprudence of Rome," his antipathy to the exclusiveness and provincialism of rabbinism, and his dislike of anything, like circumcision, which enabled the Jew to pride himself above the Gentiles. The breadth and sweep of *Romans* is not simply due to the fact that the Apostle is addressing the Christians of the capital, but to the deeper fact that, when he thought of Christianity in connection with Judaism, he realised that the former stood or fell by its appeal to human nature, irrespective of nationality. This intuition is easily felt, even when particular arguments advanced in favour of it are puzzling or unimpressive to an age which has moved away from the controversial exigencies of the Apostle's day. It tells, apart from any parsing of the text.

Nevertheless, the impact of *Romans* on experience requires to be supplemented by careful study of the original meaning; otherwise the danger is that we read into it more than it contains or other conclusions than it will bear. Many people unconsciously read the early chapters of the book of *Genesis* in the light of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and many read conventional ideas of Calvinistic theology into *Romans*, through associations of traditional exegesis, or exaggerate the Apostle's forensic language on what was more than forensic. No better training can be prescribed for ■ student than to read some modern version of *Romans* in English and also ■ book like Jowett's on *St. Paul's*

Epistles, the latter not so much for the notes as for the invaluable essays on the interpretation of the Apostle's language. Thus, in one essay, that on "Predestination and Free Will," Jowett remarks that while the Apostle's language in some parts of the Epistle seems to express conflicting principles, yet he is merely expressing the religious mind "which says at one moment, 'Let me try to do right,' and at another, 'God alone can make me do right.' The two feelings may involve a logical contradiction, and yet exist together in fact and in the religious experience of mankind." What St. Paul is really attacking, in his criticism of the Law, is the religious tendency of rabbinism as he knew it, which practically inclined to teach a religion of merit, i.e. man trying to do right, up to the Law of God as revealed in the Old Testament and codified by tradition, seeking conscientiously to produce a life which might be presented to God at the end as deserving reward or consideration. For the Apostle, "righteousness" came otherwise, by man yielding to God in Christ and allowing the Divine power to remould his nature till it became good. He could not think of merit at all, in the heart of religion; all was of God, the very power to do or to think what is right. This is the fundamental antithesis of *Romans*, that for the Christian everything begins with the redeeming grace of God which meets us in Christ, while for those who clung to Law the line was a painful and hopeless effort to work out their own salvation. The argument is put paradoxically, but it is trenchant and it cuts to the bone. He is concerned to prove that no amount of obedience to statutes of the Law, even though it be God's own Law, can yield a basis for any claim upon God or any title to pardon and fellowship. Faith, not works, is

the start of all. Not that this means the evaporation of the moral order. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (iv. 31). The practice of Christian faith is indeed the one guarantee for the moral order; but, to put it in a paradox, according to Paul's argument in *Romans*, we are not good in order to be saved, we are saved in order to be good.

This raises the crucial question, What is meant by "righteousness" in the Epistle? "Righteousness" is one of the key-words. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (i. 16, 17). There is no exact equivalent in English for the Greek word rendered "righteousness" here and elsewhere in the Epistle. It is often, like "Law," a technical term, familiar enough to those who lived in the Apostle's world, a synonym for what is meant variously by "justice" and "goodness" or "piety," but in its controversial sense obscure and even misleading nowadays. Paul charges an Old Testament term with a new meaning derived from his experience of Jesus Christ; God's righteousness here is the revelation of His life and love in power, which is conditioned by faith and faith alone (i.e. by no national privilege), a saving power, which is His own free gift imparted to men. This life of fellowship and favour originates in His will. The status of being right with Him is something men owe to Him, not to themselves, and, as the Epistle proceeds, it is further shown that it depends on His revelation in Christ; behind it pulses love, for "God proves His love for us by this, that Christ died

for us when we were yet sinners " (v. 8). To be in this state of " righteousness " is to live. That is, to be " justified by faith " is a technical term for being alive to God through the faith that accepts His gift of grace. The antithesis of " righteousness " is " death." As the sway of sin is deadly, so the sway of God's grace is in ■ righteousness that " ends in life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord " (v. 21), since the new life is union with Christ. It is thus misleading, though not unnatural on the surface, to oppose righteousness to grace, as though the former were a dread attribute which required to be supplemented by the latter. " Righteousness " is not retribution, but only another abstract term for " grace," and the Apostle uses it when he desires to bring out the truth that in the Cross of Christ God shows that He has the right as well as the will to pardon sinners. Nothing is more misleading than to imagine that for the Apostle there was any antithesis between love and righteousness in God's nature.

Wherever there is love there is life, and this relationship with God means life with Him in Christ. Theology is apt to isolate justification by faith as though it were ■ formal preliminary to deeper experience, but the Apostle conceived it otherwise. " As we are justified by faith, let us enjoy the peace we have with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ; through Him we have got access to this grace where we have our standing. . . . God's love floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us " (v. 1, 5). Much remains to be done both by God upon the justified man and by him for the God whom he has thus been privileged to know, but already this status is far more than a pale preliminary to what is termed " sanctification." Faith at once ushers a man into direct relations with the

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forgiving God ; it is from the first a vital experience, not a formal attitude.

The Apostle believed there would be but a short interval between this blissful present and the future end of all things, when God's wrath for violations of His Law would end the drama of disobedience ; the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ introduced the closing period, and consequently, from another point of view, justification by faith was the guarantee that the justified would be right with God at the final judgment. This underlies the words of a passage like v. 9 : " Much more then, now that we are justified by His blood, shall we be saved by Him from wrath." In *Romans* the term " wrath " almost invariably refers to the last judgment, though in i. 18 f. (" for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," etc.) it is conceived as already in operation. There is this background of the imminent wrath, behind the teaching upon justification. In one sense the Christian has the hope of his final justification, the assurance of being acquitted at the end, but he has also the immediate assurance of life ; that is, faith is more than hope, it is a present experience which involves a career of goodness. The gift becomes a task. Faith is not an attitude of mere waiting, but is related to the moral self ; it is more than a means of being qualified for final salvation.

This opens up the question of what moderns call the ethics of religion. Now for the Apostle, faith being more than a formal verdict or declaration, there is a vital energy in the new relation between the Christian and God. Since God has thus graciously dealt with sinners, meaning in His love to endow them with life, the action involves a moral renewal. The acquittal

is a creative act, whose consequences are traced in chs. vi.-viii. and xii.-xiv. Here too the Apostle is keen to rule out any thought of merit, even as he stresses the co-operation of the human will. He argues in such a way as to exclude the idea that in ethical obedience ■ man was somehow less dependent upon God than when he was forgiven, or that he could somehow, by establishing ■ moral record, lay God under some obligation at the final judgment. The difficult passage in vi. 13-22 is specially notable in this connection, since it shows St. Paul, characteristically Jewish in the use of language on this issue, employing "righteousness" not simply to express the religious relation set up by God, but the moral issues of that relationship. He starts from the truth that life, however you take it, is a service. (This, by the way, is one of the numerous echoes of the teaching of Jesus, who had declared that "ye cannot serve God and mammon"—implying that one or other must be served.) As Christ has broken the hold of sin over the believer, and opened up for faith the capacities of the divine life, then "you must dedicate yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, dedicating your members to God for the service of righteousness. . . . Do you not know you are the servants of the master you obey, of the master to whom you yield yourselves obedient, whether it is Sin, whose service is death, or Obedience, whose service ends in righteousness? . . . As once you dedicated your members to the service of vice and lawlessness, so now dedicate them to the service of righteousness that means consecration." Here "consecration" or holiness implies the life which belongs to God and cares to belong to Him. It is ■ religious term, with moral implications. A similar expression occurs in

xii. 1-2, where he calls upon Christians to "dedicate your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated and acceptable to God ; that is your cult, a spiritual rite " (the real meaning of the phrase rendered in the A.V. by "your reasonable service"). But in vi. 22 he concludes thus : "Now that you are set free from sin, now that you have passed into the service of God, your gain is consecration, and the end of that is life eternal. Sin's wage is death, but God's gift is life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord." He means by this turn of the phrase that even in the sphere where human wills work, in what moderns would call ethical action, there is no merit to be claimed. "Gift" is the word for the outcome of the good life ; it is the best word. A man gets something out of his service of sin, and he has only himself to thank for it ; he gets his wages paid. He also gets something out of his service of God, i.e. out of his devotion to God's will or righteousness ; but he has God to thank for this. Self-glorification is out of the question.

It was this deep sense of ethical obligation that led the Apostle to retain God's final judgment on the works of Christians, justified though they were. Logically this was excluded by his polemical doctrine that a justified man was already acquitted. But the Apostle's religious convictions were larger than his formulated arguments, and thus he can write in ii. 13, 16, "it is not the hearers of the Law who are just in the eyes of God, it is those who obey the Law who will be acquitted, on the day when God judges the secret things of men, as my gospel holds, by Jesus Christ." Faith to him was not morally indifferent, nor did it mechanically guarantee a good life. The Christian, he held, had to live out his justified position, and to face

the final scrutiny of God ; nothing could have been further from his mind than a Christian form of Pharisaism which lightly counted upon acceptance at the end.

The general scheme of thought underlying the Epistle may be understood if we survey the first four chapters. Here, in bare outline, the sin-section, beginning with i. 18, is a negative proof of the argument that the Gospel is for all, Jew and Greek alike. All need the Gospel, for all have sinned. Sin has a universal sway over humanity, and this is proved first by the empirical observation of mankind, and then by appeal to the primal sin of Adam (an anthropological argument), since death is the direct and visible penalty of sin. Death and Sin, like allied Powers, have invaded the world, and they tyrannise over human creatures, with a dominion contrary to that of God. What alone can expel them is God's grace in Jesus Christ. The conception of Death and Sin as dæmonic forces is realistic rather than metaphorical, and in v. 12 f. the Apostle works out their defeat in a philosophy of history based on his reading of the story of the Fall. The thought of death being due to sin was already familiar to the Jews of his day, but rabbinic theology did not admit that Adam's sin involved mankind in original sin ; it contented itself with connecting the fall and mortality. Sin was held to produce death. St. Paul does not raise, any more than the story of Gen. iii. does, the question, How did the evil power originate, in a fall of Satan or of the angels ? (the favourite theory of apocalyptic). Nor does the idea of an "evil tendency," beloved by the rabbis, appeal to the Apostle. He makes no use whatever of Satan or of the Serpent in the Genesis story to explain the origin of evil ; for

him man's condemnation and doom are somehow due to his being involved in Adam's first disobedience.

Under all its aspects, sin is the correlative of (the) Law. "Sin is never counted in the absence of law" (v. 13). It is impossible, he holds, for sin to exist except as violation of the Divine law. But the inference is not that there was no sin in the world until the Mosaic Law. There was sin of ■ kind, for "death reigned from Adam to Moses" (v. 14). Instead of proceeding to declare that there must have been some kind of law even before Moses (and a passage like ii. 15 implies that the Mosaic law is not equivalent always to "law"), he argues from the solidarity of mankind. That is, "even those whose sins were not like Adam's transgression" (v. 14) died, between Adam and Moses, thus paying the penalty for some sin of their own. Somehow the individual, though morally responsible, is connected with Adam's fate, according to the Apostle. And the Law (this is the argument of vii. 7 f.) acts upon the sinful lives of men, rousing their evil passions and instincts, acting like a sort of irritant, by making men conscious of their sinful characters; they find themselves unable to keep the Law, and rebellious against its precepts. This is put in biographical or autobiographical form in ch. vii. Man comes to a sense of sin as he is sensible of being under moral obligations which he cannot fulfil: he is reduced to despair, if he is acutely sensitive to evil, and so, the Apostle argues, comes to fling himself on the higher revelation of God's will. For the Law is not the last word of God. His righteousness is revealed truly in Jesus Christ, in whom He deals finally with sin and death, and provides for a full obedience to the Law's requirements through the indwelling Spirit.

Here the central passage is viii. 3, 4 : " For God has done what the Law, weakened here by the flesh, could not do ; by sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh to deal with sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order to secure the fulfilment of the Law's requirements in our lives, as we live and move not by the flesh but by the Spirit." The " flesh " is not the human self, nor is it the material nature simply, but human nature on its lower side. The headquarters of sin are in the flesh, but the Apostle does not identify the flesh and sin ; the flesh is rather the ally of sin, which has to be resisted (viii. 12, 13). In his moral intensity St. Paul often uses language that seems to verge on the Hellenistic dualism of the flesh or matter as evil and the spirit as pure, but he invariably pulls himself up. For him the flesh is sin's great opportunity, but it is not essentially evil. Hence " sinful flesh " would be misleading as a rendering of the Greek in the above passage, unless it was borne in mind that Paul means flesh that has become sinful, i.e. associated with sin. Christ coming " in the guise of sinful flesh " (and " guise " does not mean anything unreal) was the means of securing the defeat of sin at its centre (the metaphor is from a lawsuit) ; this was by His death as a sinless Son. But how ? Some argue, by His sinless life in the flesh, which censured sin openly, proved that it was not inevitable, and so obtained a verdict against its claim on human nature. Others hold that the reference is to the sinless life of Christ breaking the power of sin over human life, and thus rescuing men from its thralldom. But the meaning is probably that " in the death of His own Son, who had come in our nature to make atonement for sin, God had pronounced the doom of sin, and brought its claims

and its authority over man to an end." And the object is the true fulfilment of the Law, now rendered possible for Christians who live by the Spirit of Christ, instead of by their lower nature. Christians in the flesh still have a bad time ; they are tempted and they suffer ; but the Spirit of life in Christ, to whom they are united, triumphs over the flesh. For the Apostle the Spirit becomes, as it were, the cosmic principle of the new order, and it is the task of Christians to obey that principle by a constant moral and spiritual discipline. His sombre view of this trinity of the Flesh, the Law, and Sin, rose out of his experience, though it is stated in semi-technical terms. In the lower nature with its passions he felt the supreme obstacle lay to full obedience. Try to keep the Law, and the flesh weakens you and thwarts you. The flesh therefore proves that the Law is not the way to life, and also that life in the Spirit is a warfare still—though a warfare with a foe who has been defeated by Christ, so that the opposition felt by the Christian is in reality a series of guerrilla attacks delivered by a baffled enemy. The Christian life is a moral endeavour up to the end. As the argument of viii. 12 f. runs, the power of the Spirit is incompatible with the power of sin in the flesh, and a man must be under either one or the other. But the sway of the Spirit is not incompatible with the impulses and swarming temptations incident to the flesh, even of the man of faith. Nevertheless the supreme object of God is " to secure the fulfilment of the Law's requirements in our lives." This is the function of the Spirit. For although Paul has many disparaging things to say about the Law, still he admits " it is holy " ; " the Law is spiritual, we know that " (vii. 14). In substance it is of God, and can only be fulfilled in the Spirit ; but

fulfilled it must be. As it cannot bring with it the power to secure this, Christ supplies the power, and in His Spirit for the first time men can carry out the Divine behests. Righteousness, in short, is a task as well as a gift.

The fulfilment of the Law is love (xiii. 8-10), i.e. love to fellow-men. "He who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law." The Apostle, in pointing to this as the outcome of life in the Spirit, made a real advance in religion. The Spirit was commonly valued as the source of ecstatic experiences, sudden raptures or convulsions. These were supposed to prove that the recipient or patient was possessed by the Spirit of God. They generally meant the supersession of consciousness and a purely individual experience. The Apostle verified the Spirit in the common loyalties of the Church, not in isolated and abnormal raptures but in the practice of brotherly affection and aid. He introduces the counsel by a characteristic play on words. "Owe no man anything" (he has just been speaking about the commonplace duty of paying one's taxes), "save to love one another," the debt of love being always binding, ever incurred afresh and ever to be discharged.

It did not come in his way to speak of love to one's enemies, as Jesus advocated this. Nor does he mention love to God here. Indeed this is only mentioned in passing once, in viii. 28: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." In *Romans* as elsewhere the Apostle prefers to speak of faith in God or obedience to God rather than of love to Him. Not that he lacked warm personal devotion to God or Christ. But that comes out in other terms, which apparently seemed more adequate to express the

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adoration and humility he felt towards his Lord. It is significant that in *Romans*, as elsewhere in his Epistles, the language of endearment is applied to fellow-Christians rather than to God. Modern religious language generally reverses this.

The allusions to God's love for men are more numerous and characteristic. "Beloved by God" was a title claimed proudly by Jews of his day, and he purposely quotes an O.T. expression of it from Hosea (in ix. 13) in order to describe Gentile Christians as well as Jewish, his aim being to set aside any particularistic application of the term. Elsewhere God's love is known by men as they are forgiven and redeemed (so i. 7, v. 8). The supreme manifestation of God's love is in redemption, and from one point of view God's righteousness is His love seen in the aspect of moral holiness, as the expression of His moral character with its demands for a life corresponding to Himself. The fundamental assumption of the Apostle is that God cannot forgive without love, and that love does not mean any indulgence to sin (this is the point of iii. 21 f.). There is no trace of any conflict between love and righteousness in the Apostle's thought; the death of Christ reveals both. There is no hint that God's wrath had to be appeased by the merciful intervention of a loving Christ. But His love implied an awful sense of what sin is. He does not condone sin; that would be to treat it as morally unreal, or as less real than it is. His reconciliation on the basis of the death of Christ rests on a recognition of moral reality. And further it is to be noted that there is no real distinction between God's love and Christ's. In viii. 35 he triumphantly asks, "What can ever part us from Christ's love?" Then in a moment (ver. 39) he is certain

that nothing in this world or in the next "will be able to part us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord."

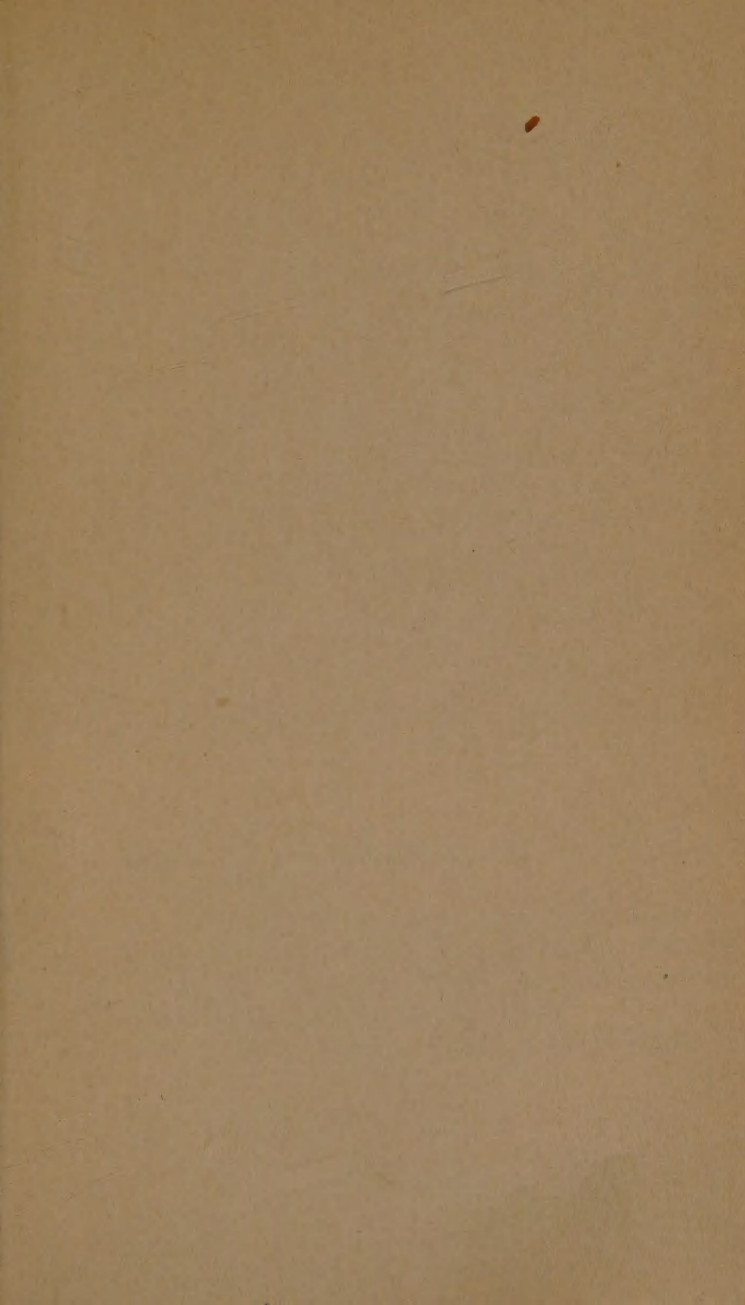
One real difficulty of the Epistle is to explain the apparently sudden transition from i.-viii. to ix.-xi., and of this various explanations have been offered. But in view of passages like ii. 17 ff. and iv. 1 it is not difficult to see how, at the close of the glowing description of Christian privileges in viii., he should suddenly be touched with a wistful desire to connect the chosen people somehow with God's saving purpose still, and to seek in the doctrine of God's sovereignty the clue to the present isolation and future incorporation of the Jewish nation.

But the real problems of the Epistle are, as has been indicated, those of interpretation; they lie especially within i.-viii. And, to close as we began, it remains to be said that the concept of God's righteousness is the clue to the whole argument, and that it is misconceived when it is isolated from the thought of Christ. This suggests a warning against one facile misinterpretation, viz. that the Divine righteousness in *Romans* is to be interpreted on the lines of the O.T. as God's loyalty and saving aid. In the prophets, for example, God is "righteous" as He intervenes to vindicate His people against threats and accusations and attacks. In Isa. xlv. 21 God is "a just god and a saviour," "just" here being "righteous." "Righteousness" in this classical connection is equivalent to saving help in a crisis, and the punishment thus inflicted by God falls on the enemies of Israel. It has been argued that in *Romans* "righteousness" similarly means the gracious loyalty of God to His people the Church. But in *Romans* the situation is entirely different. The Apostle's point is that God acted "when we were

enemies " (v. 10) to Himself, " still sinners " (ver. 8). The Cross is Christ dying in love for the ungodly. It is no longer a people faulty but still in touch with Him, and requiring vindication before the hostile world; those who need God's righteousness now are wrong, not wronged. God is righteous in the O.T., as He acts consistently with His revealed character and purpose, delivering penitent Israel and showing His wrath against all who thwart His people's interests, which are at bottom His own. But the Apostle's gospel starts, not from this national relationship, but from the fact of men alienated from Him by their own disobedience. No idea of righteousness as a spontaneous force of Divine goodness and faithfulness will do justice to the Pauline data. The core of his message, as conveyed in *Romans*, is that men have nothing to say for themselves, and can appeal to nothing except His free grace or righteousness (as already defined). The one hope is, without any thought of credit or merit, to rely on His saving love. This is the heart of St. Paul's great argument in this piece of prose, originally written for a little clan of Christians in Rome, and pregnant with wisdom and hope for all ages, even when time has changed mental preconceptions and altered some moral presuppositions. It is not that men can expect God to intervene. It is that He intervened unexpectedly and gloriously, true indeed to His character as a God of love and wisdom, but far beyond the dreams and deserts of His people. The thrill of the Apostle's religion lies in this, that God took the initiative by sending His Son to men who had no claim on Him. " Christ died for the ungodly." No other truth would start the passionate adoration and sense of indebtedness which are vital to the Pauline religious experience.

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